

## NM's film industry remains healthy

Adrian Gomez | March 15, 2021



Behind the scenes during production of "Better Call Saul." (Source: New Mexico Film Office)

**D**iversifying the film industry has been the goal for nearly a decade.

This is why the New Mexico Film Office has invested in leading training programs in various aspects of the industry.

It's starting to pay off.

The film office announced that 10 productions have either filmed or are getting ready to film around the state – in addition to "Roswell, New Mexico," "Better Call Saul" or any Netflix productions currently in production.

Across the 10 productions, 488 crew members, 123 New Mexico actors and 327 extras will be hired.

Amber Dodson, New Mexico Film Office director, said since production was given the green light months ago, the office has made sure each production follows COVID-safe procedures.

There are seven projects that are independent features, as well as three new media productions.

"It is great to see projects of all types and sizes taking advantage of the New Mexico film tax incentive program and we are here to equally support independent and local New Mexico filmmakers," Dodson said.

The feature "Twalette" is slated to begin filming in April and is directed by James Liaskos and produced by Tracy Jordan.

The film stars Ashley Ward and Zain Walker and tells the story of

two plain and shy individuals who undergo accidental transformations to look like supermodels. Their romance doesn't blossom until they return to their normal selves.

The production will employ eight New Mexico crew members, six New Mexico principal actors, and two New Mexico extras.

"New Mexico offers so much more than the vast desert landscapes it is known for," Jordan said. "Incentives, locations, skills and talents of the local crew and actors, costs, and a welcoming business climate all add up to make New Mexico an ideal place for filmmaking."

While some productions are based in Albuquerque or Santa Fe, most are taking advantage of filming around the state. The productions that film 60 miles outside of the Albuquerque/Santa Fe corridor can get an additional 5% incentive.

Areas seeing production are Colfax and Union counties for the film "Peace River." Anton Chico, Madrid, Lemitar and Playas for "Land of Dreams."

"Terror at Bigfoot Pond" filmed in Canjilon, Cebolla, Tierra Amarilla, El Vado and Rio Arriba County.

In recent years, the film office has made a push to develop more multimedia, or new media, productions. One of the biggest productions planting roots is Santa Fe-based arts collective Meow Wolf, which is producing "Meow Wolf Denver" in Santa Fe through May.

The film is directed by Chadney Everett, Tristan Love, Kron, Brad Wolfley, Annie Jaynes and Adan Canto and produced by Todd Richins, Cathleen Sutherland, and Michael Becker.

"As Meow Wolf's reach expands beyond the boundaries of New Mexico, we are proud and excited to continue producing exhibition content on our home turf, taking full advantage of the exceptional local cast and crew base," Becker said.

The production is making an impact by hiring 275 crew members, 60 principal actors and 75 extras.

According to Meow Wolf, the fictional video, audio and new media content will be presented by traditional means throughout the Denver exhibit, but will also be integrated into the physical environment and interactive with a smartphone app.

Dodson said the new media projects are utilizing New Mexicans to create amazing projects.

"This is an area where we want to expand the film and television industry and ecosystem," Dodson said. ■