

### Year in review: Film was big and TV had a renaissance

By Blake Driver  
11 December 2015

The film industry in New Mexico is booming. And officials say momentum will continue in 2016.

The New Mexico Film Office says 2015 was the biggest year for film shoots yet. And **Santa Fe Studios** reported that it's created 2.74 million job hours around the state since opening in 2011.

One of the biggest developments this year was a renaissance in television productions. Pilots and series took up a large portion of the state's film production roster alongside features and low-budget projects.

Also, Gov. Susana Martinez signed legislation this year that extends a 30 percent credit to stand-alone TV series pilot episodes, and makes it easier for feature film productions to qualify, too.

"A big impetus for film in New Mexico is that television has been giant mover," Michelle Miller, a spokeswoman for **Santa Fe Studios**, said. "You'll see Amazon and Netflix productions following the 'Breaking Bad' success. It's really driving a great renaissance at the forefront of the industry. Programming has started to go in that direction, like with 'Longmire' and 'Manhattan,' which are produced here. New Mexico is the recipient of a great deal of those TV productions."

Nick Maniatis, director of the New Mexico Film Office, recently told Business First that while new projects, for the most part, used to be developed during pilot season in February and March, now companies are producing pilots

year-round and going straight to a series. He said it's a change due in large part to the evolving distribution landscape with outlet options like Netflix and cable. TV series are becoming shorter and are finding success airing outside of the traditional fall premiere season.

Here are four TV productions shot here that got a lot of buzz this year.

#### **Better Call Saul**

The show is produced by Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould. It stars Bob Odenkirk as small-time lawyer Jimmy McGill, who transforms into Saul Goodman, the hustler/lawyer who becomes entangled with Walter White and his methamphetamine empire in "Breaking Bad." The second season of the production, which wrapped in November, was set to employ 75 to 90 New Mexico crew members, as well as local actors and extras. Each episode of the show is estimated to bring in \$1 million in direct local spending. Ten episodes were scheduled to be filmed for season two. It is filmed at Albuquerque Studios and at onsite locations around Albuquerque.

#### **Longmire**

After being canceled by A&E after three seasons, "Longmire" – a modern Western filmed in various parts of the state – was picked up by Netflix for a fourth season and 10 new episodes during 2015. The show employs more than 100 New Mexico crew members, 40 New Mexico actors and approximately 1,000 New Mexico background talent throughout



the season. It is due to again film in Santa Fe, Las Vegas, Valles Caldera, Pecos and additional Northern New Mexico sites.

### **The Night Shift**

Season two wrapped in May, the same month in which it was announced that NBC picked up a third season. The production employed about 120 New Mexico crew members, 250 New Mexico actors and local background talent.

### **Graves**

"Graves" began filming in October. It is a single-camera, half-hour political satire produced by Lionsgate, filming in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Bernalillo and Santa Fe. The production expects to employ at least 200 New Mexico crew members and approximately 2,500 local background talent. The production will shoot through January.

*Blake Driver covers economic development and innovation. Reach him at (505) 348-8308 or [bdriver@bizjournals.com](mailto:bdriver@bizjournals.com).*