



## State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

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### **New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson Signs Bills to Boost Film Industry- Announces TV Series To Shoot in New Mexico**

#### **TV series will create long-term, good paying film industry jobs**

SANTA FE, NM- New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson today signed five bills containing provisions designed to boost the state's growing film and television industry. The Governor also announced that Lions Gate Television, the television production and distribution arm of Lions Gate Entertainment (NYSE and TSX: LGF), has chosen New Mexico for the filming of the new television series, **Wildfire**. Production offices will be in Rio Rancho with plans to shoot April through August in the Rio Rancho and Algodones area.

"Our current financial incentives coupled with the additional incentives we just passed through the Legislature made the crucial difference in landing this production," said Governor Bill Richardson. "We're showing quality organizations like Lions Gate Entertainment that we will do whatever it takes to win their business and build long-term relationships that benefit both the company and the New Mexico economy."

The production, which originally received a \$4 million, three-year, interest-free loan from the State Investment Council to shoot the **Wildfire** television pilot, will employ approximately 120 New Mexicans.

Lions Gate Television won an order for the series from ABC Family Cable Network (a division of Disney/ABC Broadcasting Company) after producing the pilot. Currently 11 episodes are scheduled for production.

“It’s rare in this business that both the creative and economic opportunities converge together. Not only does New Mexico make economic sense, but the extraordinary talents of its citizens and the magnificence of its landscapes compel us to shoot here,” said Executive Producer Lloyd Segan, also Executive Producer of “The Dead Zone” (2004) TV series for Lions Gate Television, now in its fourth season on the USA Network.

“We decided to bring the production of **Wildfire** to New Mexico after successfully obtaining a good mix of labor tax credits and creative financing options that fit well within the overall Lions Gate business model. Additionally, we were impressed with the “can-do” attitude of Governor Richardson’s team, it reminds us a lot of our own culture here at Lions Gate.” said Mark Manuel, SVP, TV and Production Finance, Lions Gate Entertainment. “The additional 5 percent tax rebate incentive was an important part of our final decision to stay in New Mexico.”

In addition to the interest-free loan, Lions Gate Television plans to take advantage of the State’s 15 percent rebate on all film expenditures taxable in the State of New Mexico, the new legislation that adds an additional 5 percent tax rebate, and the Film Workforce Training Program, which pays 50 percent of the wages for eligible positions.

“We are very pleased to begin what I hope will be a long-term relationship with Lions Gate Entertainment. This TV series will provide good, well-paying jobs to New Mexicans, in addition to providing substantial direct and indirect economic impact,” said Rick Homans, secretary of New Mexico Economic Development Department.

“This television series is an important milestone for New Mexico. It is crucial for helping the New Mexico film industry become sustainable. It is critical for the growth of our film crews and will encourage the creation of infrastructure.” said Lisa Strout, Director of the New Mexico Film Office of the New Mexico Economic Development Department.

The television series **Wildfire** is an inspirational family drama depicting the experiences of a troubled teen’s life after she bonds with a horse fated for death. The story will include the triumphs and turmoil she faces as she works through her difficult past and begins a journey of emotional healing.

The story was created by Chris Teague and Michael Piller. The teleplay was written by Michael Piller and Shawn Piller, The Dead Zone (2002) TV Series, Star Trek: Voyager (1995) TV Series) Star Trek: Voyager - Caretaker (1995) Star Trek: The Next Generation - All Good Things (1994) (TV). Michael and Shawn serve as executive producer and co-executive producer respectively.

Lions Gate Entertainment is the leading independent producer and distributor of motion pictures, television programming, home entertainment, family entertainment and video-on-demand content. Its prestigious and prolific library of approximately 8000 titles is one of the largest in the entertainment industry. The Lions Gate brand name is synonymous with original, quality entertainment in markets around the world.

### **Film Industry Bills Signed Today By Governor Richardson**

**HB 410 (Lujan)** contains a **Film Post-Production Tax Credit that expands the film tax rebate to post production and the technologies** related to film. This bill opens the door for increasing the number of technologically based, high-wage jobs for New Mexicans.

**HB 122 (Gonzales)** provides **Film Production Tax Credit Loans**, allowing the State Investment Council to loan a production company up to 80% of their expected tax rebate upfront. This supports small filmmakers by assisting with cash flow in the beginning stages of production.

**HB 517 (Lujan) Film Training Program:** Allows film companies to utilize \$2 million of the Job Training Incentive Programs funds. This bill supports the highly successful film training program which will continue to be key to growing the number of film crews in the state.

**SB 416 (MJ Garcia) Low Income County Film Production Tax Credit:** This bill enhances the existing tax rebate by adding an additional 5% for expenditures made to companies and crew members who have lived in the state for at least two years.

**SB 916 (Robinson) State Investments in Film Projects & Funds:** Increases the allowable cap on the film loan from 7.5 to 15M, and increases the percentage of the Severance Tax Permanent Fund that can be utilized for film loans from 2.5% to 5%. This increase will allow television series to utilize the loan program, and encourage larger films to participant in the program. All safeguards remain intact.