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Emerald Bayou Studios Says “We’re Here to Stay”

“We’re here to stay,” Emerald Bayou Studios executives Linda Thurman and Marquetta Cheeks declared in unison. The studio founders were responding to concerns that recent press about a federal investigation into possible abuse of tax credits by a company in New Orleans might affect their plans. “We believe in the film industry here and our commitment to production, workforce training and first-class facilities in Louisiana is unwavering,” continued Ms. Cheeks.

Statistics released by the Office of Entertainment Industry Development show the Louisiana film industry is clearly bigger than one company. According to Director of Entertainment Sherri McConnell, “More than \$2.5 billion in new investment has been made in the state since the incentive program began in 2002.” A conservative estimate shows \$700 million in direct expenditures resulting from \$424 million tax credits issued.

Ms. Thurman further stated, “We’ve been encouraged by the legislators and officials who’ve reached out to reassure us of their commitment to our industry.” In a letter to industry leaders, Secretary of Economic Development Michael Olivier said, “This calendar year is shaping up to be another banner year for the industry in Louisiana, and with your support, we will all see continued success for many years to come.”

“The legislature continues to support film tax credits to grow an industry in Louisiana that will provide quality jobs for the people of Louisiana,” according to Rep. Don Cazayoux (D-New Roads). “We will also continue to monitor the program to ensure that it is run honestly and fairly, so that investors and film industry professionals, such as Emerald Bayou Studios, will invest in Louisiana.”

Emerald Bayou Studios is planning to spend \$100 million on facilities in the next two years and about \$100 million annually on production and workforce development. Studio headquarters will be in New Roads, including corporate offices, workforce training, and soundstages. Post-production and entertainment technology facilities are planned for the LITE center in Lafayette.

“I am so pleased that EBS decided to make New Roads its home. Their commitment to the industry and to the area has never wavered,” said Jamie Mabile Delatte, Director of Economic Development for Pointe Coupee Parish. “Through their leadership and knowledge of the industry, they have assisted many of us in economic development to attract a clean, vibrant industry.”

Cazayoux concluded, “Emerald Bayou’s enduring commitment to Louisiana and Pointe Coupee parish is great news.”

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