



Illinois film industry continues to expand, diversify in 2017

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CHICAGO – The Illinois FILM Office today announced that 2017 was the most diverse year for crew hires on record. Women and minority hires made up 53% of reported crew employees across the 347 television, commercial and movie projects that filmed within Illinois. These productions generated \$423 million in estimated Illinois spending and resulted in 13,797 job hires over the course of the year.

“This is a significant milestone for the film industry here in Illinois,” said Governor Bruce Rauner. “I am proud that we maintain a diversity standard to expand opportunities for women and minorities and address the systemic issue of underrepresentation. This has been a major priority during my administration, and I look forward to building upon this trend in 2018.”

In addition, Illinois has become a destination for innovation and technology companies that support film production. These independent companies offer services that were traditionally outsourced to the West Coast post-production. The move by these companies to establish a brick and mortar presence within the state signals the strength of the industry. Establishing roots within the Midwest will not only help Illinois remain the #1 production center within the region, but will strengthen Illinois’ standing across the nation.

“We’ve become a hub for film production that extends to every stage of the process, attracting editors, artists and innovators who have traditionally fled to the coasts for work,” said Illinois Film Office Director Christine Dudley. “The rising demand for original content across media platforms has kicked the doors wide open to new voices, creative ideas and unique perspectives, all of which can be found right here. Illinois has proven itself as an adaptable and exceptional place for film production.”

Primetime hits "Empire" (FOX), "Chicago Fire" "Chicago PD" and "Chicago Med" (NBC) returned to the lineup in 2017. "Shameless" (Showtime) and "Easy" (Netflix)

also returned to film more episodes. New projects like “The Chi” (20th Century Fox /Showtime), “The AV Club with John Teti” (Fusion), and “Electric Dreams” (Amazon) made Illinois home. Notable movies included “Widows” starring Viola Davis and directed by Steve McQueen, sci-fi thriller “Captive State” starring John Goodman and Vera Farmiga, “The Pages” written and directed by Illinoisan Joe Chappelle, and “What They Had” starring Hillary Swank, Michael Shannon and Bythe Danner. Additionally, “America to Me” and “Minding the Gap,” documentary works produced by Chicago’s Kartemquin Films, will premiere at the Sundance Film Festival this month. Advertising continued to be Illinois’ largest grab with over 250 projects in 2017.

The Illinois FILM Office promotes Illinois as a location for film, television and advertising productions, providing assistance with everything from location scouting and production vendors to working with local unions and guilds. The Office also administers the state’s film tax credit, which has been integral in growing a competitive film industry in Illinois. The 30 percent tax credit is awarded to productions for money spent on Illinois goods and services, including wages paid to Illinois residents. The goal of the Tax Credit Act is to grow, sustain and provide economic and job opportunities for local vendors, crew and filmmakers.