



Does your property have what it takes to be in pictures?

Here's what you need to know if a film crew comes knocking...

TAKE ONE...

Why location film production?

The number of motion picture and television productions has been growing at a rapid rate in recent years. Every year, thousands of locations are used as settings for features, television shows, commercials and print ads. The Association of Film Commissioners International states that over \$8 billion a year is spent on location by production companies. With these kinds of economic development opportunities, it is no wonder that there are over 200 film commissions world-wide trying to capture a share of this multi-billion dollar business. The film industry is unlike any other business in the world and its way of doing things can seem erratic, even strange, if you are not familiar with all of the pieces that must be put together in order to create a motion picture. Watching a movie in no way prepares us for the frenzy of activity that goes into making it. Proper preparation and understanding of what is going to happen when a film company visits your property can make the difference between a thrilling and profitable experience and one riddled with trouble and aggravation.

TAKE TWO...

Why should I rent my property to the film industry?

•You will be compensated for the use of your property

Film production can be an excellent source of additional revenue. Location fees can range from \$100 to \$20,000 per day. The average fee ranges from \$500 to \$1,000.

•The promotional value can be enormous

The media is always looking for film related stories because of the public's strong interest in the movie business. Numerous sites have become major tourist attractions based on the exposure they have received in film. The actual cornfield used in "Field of Dreams" was to be plowed until people started to arrive from all over the country to see it. Hunting Island State Park near Beaufort draws "Forrest Gump" fans because key Vietnam sequences were shot there. Cypress Gardens welcomes fans from "The Notebook" to take a boat ride through the same spot that Noah & Allie took in the film. To this day, Tidalholm in Beaufort is still known as "The Big Chill House."

•It's good for the economy

The film industry contributes significantly to both the state and local economy. In South Carolina, production revenues increased from \$10 million in '88 to over \$64 million in '06.

•Film production can be a fun and exciting experience

Participating in a film production provides a break from routine and can be a great source of pride for the people involved, whether as a property owner, employee, tenant, or a member of the community.

TAKE THREE...

What are the different types of film production?

There are several types of film productions, and all offer different budget levels that will determine such things as the crew size, the number of production vehicles and the amount of money they are able to spend on location fees. The following is a general break down of the various types of productions.

•Feature Films

Produced for worldwide theatrical distribution

Generally 75+ minutes

Includes films produced by major studios and films produced outside of the studio system (called Independent Films)

Largest production with largest crew (80-100 people), most equipment and vehicles, and the longest shooting schedule

(8-10 weeks and some up to 15 weeks)

Average budget: \$35 million, (but can range from less than \$1 million dollars to above \$80 million dollars)

Preproduction usually starts 2+ months before actual filming begins. Location scouting can start even earlier.

•Made for Television Movies

Feature length films produced for network and cable TV

Average budget less than \$3 million

Average 4 week shooting schedule

Average preproduction is 30 days

A Mini-series is a television movie several hours in length and broadcast over two or more nights

TV productions are slightly smaller in size and scope than feature films; the main difference is that they work much faster

•**Episodic Television**

One-hour television series filmed on location (e.g., "Army Wives," "Lost" and "24")

Shot in one area throughout the run of the show (can last as long as eight years)

Most start as 2-hour television movie pilot (See: Made for Television Movies)

If successful, they begin production on 13 (half-season) episodes. If ratings are good, episodes will be picked up for the second half of the season and then for the next season

A successful television series can be a great source of continual revenue to those fortunate enough to have a location that is used on a regular basis. Episodes are generally produced on a tight budget (\$750,000 to \$2 million)

Shooting schedule is about 7-10 days per episode. They work very fast and will have one director preparing an episode while another is shooting

•**Television Commercials**

Commercials are 15, 30, or 60 second advertising "spots" for products and services that are aired on television

Often shot in one day and then broadcast a week to ten days later

Average budget is \$125,000 (but can range from big budget national advertisements to small, low budget local spots)

Thousands are shot every year and provide steady business to crew, locations, and vendors

Crews are half the size or less (20-30 people) of a feature film or television production

Have short turnaround time and only have a few days to find and secure film locations

Are not as disruptive as the larger productions and involve far less wear and tear on the property in general

•**Industrial & Educational Films**

Informational films that are created to instruct or motivate

Industrials can be anything from corporate image films to technical instruction on topics ranging from explaining sophisticated machinery to medical training

Educational films are produced to release to grade schools, universities and trade schools

Most are shot on videotape

This is a very large but low profile segment of the film industry

Industrials tend to have very small crews consisting of less than 10 people with relatively little disruption

•**Still Photography**

Still photography (print shoot) is used for print advertisements and catalogs

Shoots involve very small crew with little equipment and minimum disruption

Pay lower location fees, but small inconvenience to have them on your property

Immense market

- **Music Videos**

Hundreds of music videos are filmed every week

Most are shot in Los Angeles, NY or Nashville, but are starting to venture on location more and more

Production of a music video is similar in size and budget to commercials

TAKE FOUR...

What do filmmakers look for?

First and foremost, the location must meet the requirements of the script. Then it must meet the aesthetic needs of the director and production designer. In addition to this, there are a number of other factors that make a property a good film location:

- **Space**

Enough space to place and maneuver the camera and equipment, as well as the actors and crew. Ceilings need to be high enough to accommodate the lighting equipment (higher the better).

- **Parking**

Ample parking is needed close to the location for production vehicles. Area close by for caterer to set up tables/chairs to feed the cast and crew (can be outside if weather is warm).

- **Accessibility**

Must provide sufficient access to the location. Roads to property must be able to handle large trucks. If filming on upper floors, crew will need a freight elevator.

- **Sound Quality**

Must be a reasonably quiet location to record sound without interference. Location should not be under flight pattern of an airport or too close to railroad tracks. If location is unique enough, they will make it work.

- **Electricity**

Location should have its own power source so the crew can tap into power for lights and other equipment without having to use generators.

- **Condition**

Film companies prefer locations that will remain in their present condition in case they need to come back for retakes or to shoot additional footage. If it is a television series, it may be a location that they will want to come back to on a regular basis throughout the run of the show.

- **Community Cooperation**

Community cooperation is a very important factor. Some communities place such tight restrictions on film production that filmmakers will avoid these areas. Some communities intentionally place very high permit fees to limit the number of film productions. It is very difficult, if not impossible to film in communities where the city officials are not cooperative in helping filmmakers with such things as issuing permits, providing off-duty police officers, traffic control and a lot of other details that are required for a successful film production. Check with your local government officials to find out if there are any ordinances in place regarding film production in your area, and if they welcome film production.

TAKE FIVE...

How much should I charge for the use of my property?

There is no industry standard for establishing location fees, but a fair formula to start with is as follows:

- Verify the current market value of your property.*
- Determine the monthly mortgage payment based on that value.*
- This amount is usually a fair starting point for establishing a base day rate.*
- A base day rate is the charge for 1 shooting day (12 to 15 hours).*

Keep in mind that the budget of the production may limit what they can afford to pay. Each production is different. Evaluate all the facts and you can increase or decrease your day rate on a case by case basis.

- Day rate is total use of the property (interior & exterior). If your driveway is used to show a car pulling out, the company will not expect to be charged the entire day rate.
- How many shooting days are required?
- Are they shooting days, nights, or both?
- How many days' preparation days are needed?
- Companies pay less for prep days and wrap days than for shooting days (can range anywhere from half the daily shooting fee down to about a quarter). There is also generally a fee paid for holding the location between the time it is prepped and the time of shooting. This fee is generally the same as the prep day fee. If there is no inconvenience to you they may not want to pay this fee.
- How many days will it take to return the property to its original condition?
- Do the scenes involve special effects or other action that could cause additional wear and tear on the property?
- Will you have to move out of the property entirely? In the film business, everything is negotiable, and there is nothing wrong with securing the best possible deal for the use of your property. But remember, production companies will usually decline the perfect location for two reasons: **exorbitant costs**, or **trouble dealing with unreasonable property owners**. Please try to always be reasonable. You want to set a price that is high enough to recoup any expenses you incur and makes you a fair profit; however, you also want to set it low enough to encourage repeat business.

TAKE SIX...

What do I look for in the contract?

Once you have agreed upon the specifications, you will need to put them in writing. Be sure your agreement is signed by a principle or agent for the production company. It is customary for the production company to provide these types of agreements; however, you as the property owner, have every right to negotiate. As the owner of the property, you should also request a certificate of insurance, including a **hold harmless clause**, for protection in case of any injuries occur on your property. All production companies should carry insurance policies that cover third parties for property damage and liability. Request a copy of this policy, with you **listed as the additionally issued** third party, **before** any physical production takes place.

TAKE SEVEN...

How do I market my property to the film Industry?

By far, our strongest sales pitch to filmmakers is the unique locations found throughout S.C. You can help us effectively market the state by creating a location file of your property that will encourage filmmakers to bring their business here. The industry standard is to take digital pictures (150KB – 350KB ea.) showing various angles on both the exterior and interior of your property. This is where you get to play Director, so get creative! Make your place stand out from every other location that may offer the same look. Choosing to highlight a nearby stream or pond, waterfall, barn, pool, gazebo, etc., emphasizing a portion of architecture, shooting from atop a nearby hill, or waiting for the early morning or late afternoon light (“magic hour” as Hollywood calls it), may make the difference in having a director look at your location over another similar one from our neighboring states. Document all angles; shoot from the front door, looking out to the street, and vice-versa. Please be sure to label each area (e.g. Recreation Room, Master bedroom) and let us know of any special information (history, unique materials used in construction of bldg.) and/or restrictions pertaining to the location.

You can email your digital photos to danrogers@scprt.com, or burn them onto a CD and mail them to:

South Carolina Film Commission
1205 Pendleton St., Room 225
Columbia, SC 29201
Attention: Scout Your Own Locations

Be sure to include your name, street address, email address and any and ALL phone numbers. It is very important that we are able to contact you.

If you have any questions regarding this information, feel free to call our office at (803) 737-0496.

Thank you for assisting us with our efforts!



More for your movie.