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New Mexico kicks in \$10 million to build Santa Fe movie and TV studio

The \$25-million project will be the state's second major sound stage facility after Albuquerque Studios, which has helped fuel the state's film growth since opening in 2007.

*By Richard Verrier
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New Mexico is determined to stay in the Hollywood limelight.

Much to the chagrin of California, New Mexico has emerged as a major draw for movies and TV shows in recent years. Credit a generous 25% film production rebate, favorable climate and an aggressive film office.

Now the state that bills itself as "Hollywood's Newest Home" is ratcheting up the competition. With the support of a \$10-million economic development grant from the state, developers are about to break ground on a major production studio just outside Santa Fe, the state's capital.

The \$25-million project, called **Santa Fe Studios**, will include two 18,000-square-foot sound stages and 27,000 square feet of warehouse space. It will be the state's second major sound stage facility after Albuquerque Studios, which has eight sound stages and has helped fuel the state's film growth since opening in 2007. The studio is home to the TV series *Breaking Bad* and the cable channel Reelz, which relocated from Los Angeles last year. It also has hosted production of such movies as *Terminator Salvation*.

"We feel positively about the future of the film business here," said Jason Hool, president of **Santa Fe Studios**, which is owned by Hool's family. "There is plenty of film work to go around." The new facility is targeted to open next fall.

New Mexico drew almost \$267.9 million in direct film spending in the fiscal year that ended June 30, about flat compared with the same period a year earlier, but up from \$150.8 million in fiscal 2007, the New Mexico Film Office said.

The new sound stages will draw more business to the state, local film promoters predict. "We have the opportunity to get the stage work that doubles or triples the amount of time that a production is working within our state," said Lisa Strout, director of the New Mexico Film Office.

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