

Star Power Gets Brighter

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EDITORIAL

If you see Uma Thurman on the streets of New Haven or John Turturro and Oliver Platt in Norwich, your eyes aren't deceiving you. The actors are around this fall in part because of tax credits for movie companies that shoot footage in Connecticut.

At least three major film projects are underway, including "In Bloom" starring Ms. Thurman and "The Bronx Is Burning," an ESPN series about the N.Y. Yankees that will be filmed at Dodd Stadium and other places in Connecticut.

The payout for these and the coming filming of "Reservation Road" in Fairfield County will translate into millions in state revenue. A law that went into effect July 1 offers production companies a 30 percent tax credit for money spent in Connecticut on goods, services and labor.

This incentive - a cooperative effort by the legislature and Gov. M. Jodi Rell - was a great idea for creating jobs. It is competitive with perks offered in neighboring states that attract film production and has the potential to draw related industry, such as camera and equipment suppliers and film crew caterers.

The tax package sets the stage for success in an industry that has great potential to grow here. Two large movie studio complexes have been proposed for the southeastern part of the state. If they come to pass, that region in particular could become a magnet for film companies who see an economical alternative to New York and Los Angeles or points south.

So far, the film division of the state Commission on Culture and Tourism is doing a good job of educating business owners such as hotel managers, service providers such as car rental agencies, and municipal development officials on how to fill this desirable niche.

The commission is appealing to private investors to consider building television studios for which there is apparent demand.

Connecticut is a beautiful state with a unique New England look and some of the most gorgeous colonial architecture in the region. Movies have been made here since the 19th century, including some classics. One online database lists more than 300 movies made in Connecticut, from training films to some of Oscar caliber.

But too few have been shot entirely in the state. Connecticut's new incentives appear to be changing that picture.