

# newmexicofilmooffice

December 2020 Edition



## DIRECTORS CUT

Seasons Greetings!

I hope all of you are finding time and special ways to enjoy this holiday season.

The New Mexico Film Office is wrapping up a big year for the film and television industry in New Mexico!

In January, both Santa Fe and Albuquerque were named on **MovieMaker's 2020 Best Places to Live and Work** and a **MovieMaker** list. Albuquerque was crowned #1 for big cities and Santa Fe came in at #3 for small cities and towns.

In March, New Mexico was chosen as host to Deadline's very first **HotSpots Conference**. The idea behind the conference is to shine a spotlight on locations outside of Los Angeles, and it brought film and television industry decision-makers from across the country to experience all that New Mexico has to offer as a premiere film and TV production hub. The conference featured sessions such as Diversity and Inclusion in New Mexico, World-Class Crew Base – Largest Between the Coasts, Film Locations – Diverse, Accessible and Fresh, a Fireside Chat with Netflix, a Keynote Address from NBCUniversal, and more. During each session the all-star panelists



confirmed a major theme – New Mexico offers what other places can't buy – great weather all-year round, an easy commute, state of the art facilities, a world-class crew base, over 20 post-secondary schools teaching film/media close proximity to Los Angeles, among many other qualities.

In July, we awarded **twenty \$5,000 grants to Native film students and filmmakers living and working in New Mexico from our Senator John Pinto Memorial Native Filmmaker Fund**. The fund was established in 2019 in honor of the late Senator John Pinto and his relentless support for the Native American Film Industry. The fund allocated \$100,000 for grants that are to be awarded to filmmakers who are members of New Mexico tribes and pueblos. Funds can be used towards projects in pre-production, production, and post-production. Learn more about this incredible program at [nmfilm.com](http://nmfilm.com).

Just last week, **Netflix announced plans to expand the ABQ Studios** in Albuquerque's Mesa del Sol Area. The commitment includes an additional \$1 billion in production spend, 1,000 additional production jobs, and the company will add up to ten new stages, post-production services, production offices, mills, backlots, training facilities, wardrobe suites, a commissary, and other flex buildings to support productions. As many of you know, in 2018 Netflix chose New Mexico as their first domestic production hub. With last month's announcement, New Mexico will now be home to their largest production facility in North America. Netflix understands the unique assets New Mexico has to offer. This expanded, long-term partnership with them is exciting news for all of New Mexico, as we expect many Netflix productions over the next decade to be filmed all across our beautiful state.

One thing we know will be essential, as we continue to attract film production in New Mexico, is working to scale up our talent and crew base. Toward this end, in early November, we announced a **FREE training program for NM Background Actors**. Background acting is one way to get your foot in the door, make connections, and become familiar with set etiquette. We encourage you to sign up!

A new program that I'm particularly proud of is our new **Intimacy Coordinator Training Program**. This new role and career of Intimacy Coordinators arose in the wake of the #MeToo movement. Intimacy Coordinators are a critical component creating more safe, inclusive, and collaborative sets. Intimacy Coordinators are expert advocates and liaisons working with the performers, directors, and producers to ensure a more strategic, transparent, empowered, and respectful dialogue and to plan to execute intimate scenes while achieving artistic goals. As we continue to make New Mexico a world-class, end-to-end production destination, ensuring safety on set is a top priority. We are very excited to work with Amanda Blumenthal, of Intimacy Professionals Association to provide Intimacy Coordinator training right here in New Mexico, for New Mexicans.

In mid-January of 2021, we will hold our quarterly film update meeting in what has been dubbed the "NM Film Scene." This meeting is intended for those near and far to join us and keep informed and connected to all things related to the NM film industry. Keep your eyes on our social media channels for details on this event and other news and announcements.

We are in the midst of a new era for film and television in New Mexico and we hope you choose our state to tell your story!

Cheers and Warm Wishes-

**Amber Dodson**  
Director

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## RECENT PRESS RELEASES

### Netflix Plans to Boost New Mexico Presence with Expansion of ABQ Studios

New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller, together with Netflix Co-CEO Ted Sarandos, announced that Netflix, the world's leading internet

entertainment service, plans to boost its presence in the state by expanding ABQ Studios and committing to an additional \$1 billion in production spend. The expansion will add 300 acres to the company's existing space at ABQ Studios, located in Albuquerque's Mesa Del Sol area, making it one of the largest high-tech and sustainable film production facilities in North America.

[Read Full Press Release](#)

## **The New Mexico Film Office Launches New Intimacy Coordinator Training Program**

The New Mexico Film Office (NMFO) announced a new Intimacy Coordinator (IC) Training Program, aimed at increasing safety on sets in New Mexico. NMFO is partnering with the Intimacy Professionals Association (IPA) Intimacy Coordinator Training Program, taught by Amanda Blumenthal, to prepare individuals in New Mexico's film and television industry to work as Intimacy Coordinators in full-length feature film and television productions upon completion of the training.

[Read Full Press Release](#)

## **New Mexico Film Office Supports Training Program for Background Actors**

The New Mexico Film Office announced support for a new workforce development program, to train New Mexico background workers in the film and television industry. The program, The Industry Forum, will be free to New Mexico residents. Those who participate in the program will learn about the film industry and how to be a professional background actor from experts in the industry.

[Read Full Press Release](#)

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## **SPOTLIGHT**

### **Regional Spotlight - Doña Ana County**



Las Cruces is New Mexico's 2nd largest city with a population over 100,000. You may think of Las Cruces, NM as being just desert. But, you'll be surprised at the diversity found here - mountains, lakes, rivers, desert, forest, agriculture, SciFi scenes, urban, southwestern AND non-southwestern architecture.

Within a 60 mile radius of Las Cruces you will find White Sands National Monument, Spaceport America, Ciudad Juarez, 500,000+ acres of farmland, windmill and solar farms, "anywhere" USA neighborhoods, the Rio Grande, and direct flights to Los Angeles. An 8 month long growing season provides for a nearly yearlong agricultural look, while our diverse locations experience 300+ days of sunshine.

Film productions shooting in Las Cruces qualify for the base tax incentive of 25% on qualifying New Mexico spend PLUS an additional 5% of the Alternative Zone Film





Tax Credit. Television qualifies for an additional 5%, or shoot in a Qualified Studio Facility and you qualify for an additional 5% - making Las Cruces one of the few places in the state where the full 35% Film Tax Credit is achievable.

Las Cruces has a long history of providing some of the best film production education in the southwest. The Creative Media Institute at New Mexico State University graduates 40-60 digital film and animation majors each year. Doña Ana Community College offers one of three Film Technician Training Programs available in the state. Graduating from any of these programs counts for 15 days towards their Local 480 membership.

Film Las Cruces manages the film office and film/media economic development efforts for the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. Film Las Cruces is a full service film office providing location packages and scouting services, as well as liaison services for productions filming in the Las Cruces and Doña Ana County area. On our website you will find extensive databases including: 400+ locations, 150+ local crew members, and a film friendly vendor program with businesses that provide film and media production specific discounts.

Film Las Cruces also manages the Film Las Cruces Studios. The Film Las Cruces Studios features six individual production spaces, as well as a built in office and multiple sets, including a plane, the oval office, and a prison.

In addition to all of these great elements of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, the City of Las Cruces has a \$3.8M fund to help establish a purpose-built film studio and additional funding opportunities to support this investment.

For more information on Doña Ana County and the Las Cruces area visit <http://www.filmlascruces.com/>



## Location Spotlight - New Mexico State University



As a location asset, New Mexico State University is not just 900+ acres of campus. NMSU owns and manages more than 80,000 acres of property including: a golf course, horse farm, mountainous landscape terrain, pecan orchards, and much more.

From Spanish Renaissance to Modern Architecture, the NMSU campus features stunning architecture spanning 113 years.

NMSU has it all: 30,000+ capacity football stadium, 13,000 seat multi-purpose arena, 500 seat recital hall, activity centers, NCAA competition outdoor pool, on-campus housing neighborhoods, and medical training facilities.

Although Film Las Cruces handles film permitting for the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, New Mexico State University has their own procedures in place for this type of request. Film Las Cruces has seen first hand the gracious nature of NMSU and their handling of film production requests. Reach out to our office and we would be happy to guide you through their process.



## Film Office Spotlight - Film Las Cruces

The Las Cruces and Doña Ana County Film office is run by New Mexico film industry veteran, Don Gray. Film Las Cruces Director Don Gray has been a fixture in the NM industry for nearly twenty years and is considered one of the most knowledgeable and experienced film professionals in the state.

Gray began his film career as a location manager and scout. In 2006 he joined the New Mexico State Film Office and served for 14 years as the locations coordinator for the office. In addition





to his location credentials, Gray also has extensive experience in branding, marketing, and public outreach, and is also a former contributing faculty member at the The Film School at Santa Fe University of Art and Design. He also has taught for the Association of Film Commissioners International. His resume includes some of the major titles produced in NM including Breaking Bad, Terminator Salvation, Logan, Jumanji, True Grit, and hundreds more. Gray joined the industry in the first years of the state film incentive and is credited with being one of the early drivers and builders to what has become a thriving economic driver for New Mexico.

“In my work attracting productions to the state, I have spent a lot of time in the Las Cruces area over the years” said Gray “I have always felt the area has the elements necessary to become a very busy production zone in the industry. Las

Cruces has amazing locations, a studio facility, a supportive community, population base, proximity to commercial air travel, local infrastructure and support businesses, educational institutions - everything we need including an extremely competitive tax rebate. The recent addition of a 5% rural credit means that productions shooting here can receive up to 35% in a tax rebate from the state. That makes us very competitive. There is no reason why we should not be a very busy center. I’m going to leverage my relationships and experience to make sure the industry knows about us.”

## Film Liaison Spotlight Jonathon Sepp

In addition to Mr. Gray, Jonathon Sepp serves as the official Film Liaison for the Las Cruces area.

Jonathon Sepp (previously Jon Foley) is a native of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. He set his sights on the film and media industry at a young age and received the Film Technician Training Program certificate upon graduating from Las Cruces High School. After completing his BFA from the Creative Media Institute at NMSU, he went to work as a grip and camera operator. This February will mark 4 years that Jonathon has been with Film Las Cruces.



As with many people born in the southwest, Jonathan is an outdoor enthusiast. If he’s not spending time with his wife, dogs, cat, or chickens, he is out mountain biking or off-roading.

Having an eye for photography, Jonathon knows very well how incredible Las Cruces can be for the film and media industry in New Mexico. “Las Cruces and Doña Ana County offer such a unique blend of locations to choose from - most within a 15 minute drive from each other,” Sepp says. “One of my favorite untapped locations is a tucked-away Charreada Arena behind a quarry just a few miles south of town.”

“As most location managers and scouts know, location needs are often appear like precision guesswork and are filled with last minute changes that required weeks of prep,” he added. “I take pride in my ability to work on the fly to maximize our guest’s time when on a location scout or working swiftly through tasks like ITC needed a week sooner than planned.”

In addition to Mr. Gray, and Mr. Sepp, Christine Shepard coordinates the operations for Film Las Cruces and Guillermo Portillo manages the 75,000 sq. ft. Film Las Cruces Studios.

## Crew Member Spotlight - Frederick Sinayor



Based out of Las Cruces, Fredrick Sinayor is a graduate of both Doña Ana Community College and New Mexico State University. Since graduating, Fredrick has been an active member of the independent film community in Las Cruces and a valued IATSE Local 480 film technician worker throughout the entire state of New Mexico. Fredrick is originally from Ghana and immigrated to the U.S. in 2011.

"I see the world from a different perspective," Fredrick Sinayor said. "Filmmaking has given me the expression and interactions to expand my abilities to communicate through cinema, art, and other forms of media."

Fredrick is currently a set lighting technician working in Santa Fe on Netflix's feature film production, "The Harder They Fall." Additional credits include:

News of the World - Lighting Technician

Half Brothers - Rigging Assistant Chief Lighting Technician

Silk Road - Lighting Technician

Death in Texas - Best Boy Electric

The Comeback Trail - Set Lighting Technician

Perpetual Grace, LTD - Rigging Electric

Because of his diverse life experiences and cultural background, Fredrick has a unique vision and approach to his work. When he is not on a film or television set, he operates a video production company, Don Babo Productions.

"Darkness, light, and color make the magic," Fredrick added. "Dial up the sun."

## Vendor Spotlight - 603 Productions

First founded as a professional audio services company in 2015, 603 productions is a film equipment rental company based out of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

New Mexico has long been a favorite location for filmmakers because of its wide variety of scenic locations, and has recently emerged as one of the fastest-growing centers for film production by offering some of the most competitive tax incentives in the industry.



Recognizing New Mexico's importance to the film industry, and understanding that providing industry standard equipment to productions filming in New Mexico was paramount, we made the ambitious decision to start a grip / lighting rental company in 2019. In addition to

equipment rental, we also believe in community, and support our convictions through providing top quality rentals in hopes of providing opportunities to the talented cast and crew members of Las Cruces.

“We are proud to be involved in all aspects of the New Mexico film industry, and take special pride in being from southern New Mexico,” Dave Wheeler, Owner of 603 Productions, said.



## Senator John Pinto Awardee Spotlight

**Homeopathy for Native America (working title),  
submitted by Leahn Marie Cox (Navajo)**

This film seeks to show Cox’s view of the parallels between homeopathy and Native American traditional healing wisdom. Understanding these parallels, Cox explains, can re-inspire interest in Native forms of healing and can help find solutions for highly traumatized and impoverished communities.

“I am very grateful to [Senator] John Pinto for creating this grant for Native American filmmakers in New Mexico,” filmmaker Leahn Marie Cox said. “It takes effort to appreciate traditional indigenous knowledge in the world today. I do not lament this, but see this serious challenge as unique and demanding.”

**[Watch this short video](#)** on what the funding means for the SJP awardees.

## IN THE NEWS

Netflix Commits \$1 Billion More In New Mexico Production Funding As It Expands ABQ Studios; ‘Stranger Things’ Joins List Of Albuquerque-Set Shows

**[Deadline](#)**

Netflix plans significant expansion in Albuquerque

**[Albuquerque Journal](#)**

Here's what New Mexico officials and leaders have said about Netflix's planned expansion in Albuquerque

**[ABQ Business First](#)**

New Mexico Film Office initiates new intimacy coordinator training program

**[KRQE](#)**



Getting in on the Act:  
Program will train New Mexicans for  
background roles in the film industry

Albuquerque Journal

State Announces Four New Films  
Produced in NM

ABQ Business First

## OPPORTUNITIES

### CASTING CALLS

Healthcare Ad

About: Navajo Families (Mom, Dad and Kid/s)

Navajo Elders (Couple)

Additional Info: We are requesting real families

Please email pictures (can be candid) & contact information ASAP

Dates: ASAP

Location: Albuquerque Area

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Production Title: To Be Announced/web series;

Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV, Stareable

Genre: Christian/Drama

Production Company: NBP Productions

About: A series that follows the lives of three individuals trying to stay on the graceful path of life.

Additional Info: Paid/Meals will be provided on all film days/IMDb credits will be given.

Casting: 21-40 yrs old male

Submit headshots to [thegracefulpath@gmail.com](mailto:thegracefulpath@gmail.com)

Contact TGP Casting Team at [thegracefulpath@gmail.com](mailto:thegracefulpath@gmail.com) for additional information

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Production Title: To Be Announced

Production Company: NuVision Films

About: A small-town university desperate to save its basketball program coaxes one of college basketball's winningest coaches out of a decade long retirement, and with a group of unheralded new age hoopsters, they set their sights on punching the school's first ticket to the NCAA basketball National Championship "Big Dance."

Genre: Sports/drama

Location: Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, NM

Casting:

Male Basketball Players: must look 18-23, all skill levels for game action and uniformed extras to fill out teams. Submit info including: name, height and basketball experience.

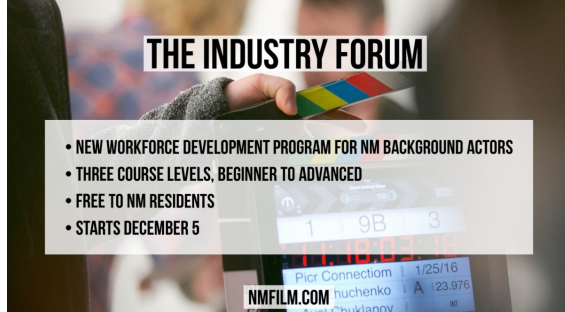
Female Cheerleaders: look 18-23, have cheerleader or dance experience, must be able to learn routines quickly.

Send resume and/or headshots to: [info@nuvisionfilm.com](mailto:info@nuvisionfilm.com).

## EVENTS

The Industry Forum:  
Background Performers Series

Training for Background Actors  
Saturday, December 5, 6pm MST



Virtual Webinar/  
FREE to NM Residents

**Register to Attend**

Intimacy Coordinator Training Program

Informational Webinar/Panel  
December 15, 2pm MST  
Zoom

**Meeting Registration**



The NM Film Scene

Update on the NM film industry  
Monday, January 11

**YouTube**

**New Mexico Film Office (NMFO)**  
**[www.nmfilm.com](http://www.nmfilm.com)**  
**[info@nmfilm.com](mailto:info@nmfilm.com)**  
**505-476-5600**

**Follow us on social media!**

