

Ontario's film and TV production soars with record-breaking year

By **Mark Pavilons**

Ontario's robust film and TV production is reaching new levels.

Thanks to strong support and home-grown talent, the province and its municipalities are reaping the rewards.

Ontario Creates, the government agency dedicated to bolstering our creative industries, announced another record-breaking year in TV and film production.

Ontario reported its highest production levels to date with 394 productions bringing in \$2.88 billion in production spending for the economy. In addition to dollar value, these figures represent over 48,000 full-time equivalent direct and spin-off jobs, which is an increase of 38 per cent or 18,468 jobs from 2020.

"The government's commitment to growing Ontario's film and television industry means big business for Ontario," said Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries. "Ontario offers a safe, business-friendly environment where productions can thrive, good jobs can grow, and great content gets made - there is no better place to create content than right here in Ontario."

"We are thrilled to see Ontario's film and television industry leading the province's economic recovery," said Karen Thorne-Stone, president and CEO at Ontario Creates. "These figures are a testament to our robust health and safety protocols, impressive suite of financial incentives, ongoing studio space expansion, diverse talent pool, and an unmatched range of film-friendly locations."

King-based actor Enrico Colantoni said it's good news when the film and television industry in Ontario gets acknowledged for the contribution they make to our economy.

"It usually goes unnoticed," he said.

Not so any more, with numbers like these.

Also, King has enjoyed its time in the spotlight, too. Schomberg's Main Street is often sought after as a perfect locale for filming. It has been featured in several TV episodes and movies.

Ontario offers competitive tax credits and programs to support film and television production, which play an important role in increasing economic activity and job creation in the province.

In addition, Ontario Creates works closely with a network of 80 municipal film offices across the province to identify and promote local filming locations, production services, and hospitality services that attract and retain both foreign and domestic film production, ensuring the economic and employment benefits of Ontario's vibrant film and television industry are felt all across the province.

A portion of the 2021 increase can be attributed to COVID-19 recovery following the brief industry shutdown in 2020. The rest of the increase represents new growth in production and is a testament to Ontario's robust health and safety protocols, impressive suite of financial incentives, ongoing studio space expansion, diverse talent pool, and an unmatched range of film-friendly locations.

Domestic film and television production held strong in 2021, contributing \$965 million after a lull in 2020.

Domestic television series production was particularly robust in 2021, with 115 productions contributing over \$707 million in

expenditures.

Foreign production remained strong in 2021, led by a strong television industry. Total expenditures in 2021 reached over \$1.9 billion.

Live action production increased in 2021 accounting for 361 of the total 394 productions.

Newmarket Council recently announced a \$50,000 investment in the downtown focused on the Main Street District Business Improvement Area (BIA) and economic development initiatives, resulting from the film production revenue.

“As a Town Council we are really excited to use this opportunity to drive growth and development in Newmarket as we recover from two years of uncertainty,” said Mayor John Taylor. “The film production will bring direct revenue to the downtown and across our town while it is here, but we want to provide a more targeted, direct investment in the downtown business community over the spring and summer to help with the recovery and to recognize that there will be impacts on the downtown due to the filming. That is why we are creating a program that will drive revenue and awareness in the downtown and bring life back to our Main Street after years of COVID restrictions.”

There's more good news, as filming started in Newmarket's downtown core, near the Old Town Hall, for the Canadian hit *Handmaid's Tale*.

For more information on government programs, visit ontariocreates.ca