

Ontario registers biggest year ever

TORONTO - This year is proving to be the most prolific period ever for film and television production in Ontario, an official with the Ontario Film Development Corporation says.

Brian Villeneuve, executive co-ordinator of the OFDC's marketing program, said the first eight months of 1986 have brought a 130 per cent increase in the total money spent on productions in Ontario compared to the same period one year before.

By August 15, 1986 the province's film development corporation, founded in January of this year, had provided more than \$1.4 million in funds to help with 15 productions. It has received more than 200 funding requests.

By the end of August, in Ontario, 34 productions have pumped \$115.2 million into the economy of the province, Villeneuve said. The productions, which include feature films, television mini-series and made-for-television specials, are split evenly between 17 foreign and 17 Canadian shows made in the province.

Villeneuve said the film and television production industry is booming right across Canada and North America as a whole. With the help of its newly formed film development corporation, Ontario has experienced a banner year, he said.

The OFDC has approved funds to help support projects ranging from *The Comic Book Film* by Sphinx Productions to *John and the Missus* by Big Island Motion Pictures Inc. to *Gordon Pinsent Sings Fred Astaire* by Loral Productions.

The film development corporation has two main jobs. The OFDC is to stimulate employment and investment in the film and television industry through its production and development program and is also to attract production companies to use Ontario as a location through its marketing program.

The film development corporation, between April and August 15, 1986, also invested a total of \$430,000 in development money for script and project ideas, a news release says.

Wayne Clarkson, chairman of the film development corporation, said the provincial corporation's financial plan is on target with a total budget of \$7.4 million. He said the OFDC's investments have stimulated the province's film and television production industry.

"These OFDC investments have generated in excess of \$17 million in total production

dollars. We are pleased to be the catalyst in developing a creative and economically viable Ontario-based film and television industry," he states in a written release.

Film corporation official Bill House said the corporation has been aggressively pursuing feature films, but is also contributing to the television production industry.

House said that, through a special projects program, support has been given to low budget feature films as well as professional development

events like the Festival of Festival Trade Forum and the Grierson Documentary Seminar.

According to OFDC records, by the end of the first seven months of 1986, \$7 million more was spent on film and television production in Ontario than in all of 1985, which was the previous best period.

Villeneuve said it is impossible to measure the exact impact the OFDC has had on the industry, but added that the corporation is involved, at various stages, in all productions.

"We are not simply number crunching here," Villeneuve said. He added that the OFDC's efforts are critical to the decision-making of production companies who are considering filming in Ontario.

Villeneuve said there is a range of factors contributing to the improved film and television industry in Ontario.

"There is no doubt that the dollar exchange value is a big factor for American producers....," he said. But so are support crews, location scouting and a variety of other factors, he added.

Villeneuve said it appears that the trend towards increased production will con-

tinue in the immediate future. The big question, he said, is "What do we do for an encore in 1987."

MONTREAL - France-Films the only Quebec-owned theatre chain in operation in Quebec may soon be absorbed by the large Toronto-based Cineplex-Odeon with theatres throughout North America. The Montreal newspaper *Le Devoir* reported Oct. 9 that Pierre René, chief executive officer of France-Films is close to signing an agreement with Cineplex-Odeon. The Quebec based theatre chain has 24 theaters across Quebec. Both parties refused to comment.

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