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Hollywood producer behind Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles backs Westside complex



Mesa Film Studios, which will be built on a 60-acre plot on Albuquerque's Westside, is backed by Galen Walker, a longtime Hollywood sound editor and producer.

STEPHANIE GUZMAN | ALBUQUERQUE BUSINESS FIRST



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Galen Walker, a Hollywood producer best known for his work on several Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movies, is co-owner of the planned Mesa Film Studios, the City of Albuquerque revealed today.

The complex, which was originally announced during Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's State of the State address in January, aims to be one of the largest production facilities in New Mexico. Planned amenities include six soundstages, a backlot, a mill and office space capacity.

Mesa Film Studios will also pursue being the state's next film partner – an agreement that establishes required amounts of production and spending for the studio in exchange for benefits, such as expanded tax credits.

Currently, Netflix (NASDAQ: NFLX), NBCUniversal (NASDAQ: CMCSA) and 828 Productions are the only studios to be granted the distinction. Cinelease Studios is also hoping to land the title after its recently announced \$95 million expansion.

In a statement, Walker, who is from New Mexico, said he is "excited to be coming home after a long career in Hollywood."

Walker has worked in the entertainment industry for over three decades, facilitating projects through a string of production departments and companies. His roles have primarily been in sound editing and production or as a producer.

Aside from the 2007, 2014 and 2016 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles films, he was a producer of the heavily awarded 2020 science fiction film "The Unhealer" and served in the sound department for 1999's "The Virgin Suicides." His full resume numbers films in the dozens, with a focus on the independent scene.

The other co-owner of the project has not been revealed.

Apart from Walker's reveal, the City's announcement also shedded new light on what Mesa Film Studios will look like.

The first phase of the project will have a capital investment of \$57 million on a 60-acre site to the north of Double Eagle II, a news release said. The City estimated the creation of 11,000 jobs over the studio's first 10 years. The lease agreement for the plot, which is owned by the City, will go in front of the upcoming Albuquerque City Council meeting on March 18.

Notably, Mesa Film Studios will aim to help curb the shortage of soundstages not just in New Mexico, but across the country. Amber Dodson, director of the New Mexico Film Office, previously told Albuquerque Business First that demand for content in recent years is to blame.

"As things have just charged ahead, we've never had enough stages for the growth that we've seen. That's a national problem, that's a global problem," Dodson previously said.

“This development, which will be in the major metropolitan area, has been needed for a long time.”

New Mexico productions have ramped up in 2024 following the end of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) strike in November and the ratification of the union’s new contract in December.

“Eddington,” an A24 film starring Joaquin Phoenix, Pedro Pascal and Emma Stone, will soon begin filming in Albuquerque, Santa Fe County and Truth or Consequences and “Honey Don’t!,” Ethan Coen’s latest film, is currently filming in and around Albuquerque. “She Rides Shotgun,” starring Taron Egerton of “Kingsman: The Secret Service” fame, recently wrapped in Albuquerque and Zia Pueblo.