

By  
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# Production CENTRAL

ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION MEANS BIG BUSINESS IN CENTRAL FLORIDA



SKY DOG PRODUCTIONS

Orlando supports an annual entertainment-production market of more than \$845 million, with projects that include TV commercials and series, music videos, and feature films such as *Renee*, which was shot in downtown Orlando and Eatonville.

➤➤ With state-of-the-art infrastructure, a skilled crew base, and a tropical climate, Orlando has become one of the country's top locations for the entertainment industry, supporting an annual production market of more than \$845 million. A wide range of projects takes place here, from television commercials to music videos to feature-length films and everything in between. In the last year, Orlando has hosted films including *Renee*, *Tooth Fairy 2* and *Transformers 3*; TV series such as "Dr. G: Medical Examiner," "U.K. Biggest Loser," "Forensic Files," and "Fix This Yard"; plus commercials for such powerhouses as Allegra, Carnival Cruise, Chevrolet, Kellogg's and New York Life, to name a few.

At the core of these productions is the Metro Orlando Film Commission, a division of the Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission (EDC), that works to bring film and television production to the region. "Orlando maintains a steady industry hosting production that fills screens of all sizes from theatrical releases to Web series," says Metro Orlando Film Commissioner Sheena Fowler.

The film office is the first point of contact when a production is looking at filming in the region. Fowler and her team work directly with the producers to ensure that they have the resources they need from location scouting to post-production.

Tom Weber, director of the feature film *Ring the Bell* that just wrapped production in March, said, "We've never had a better experience across the board. We could not have asked for more."

"What we tout when talking with producers and directors when they are considering filming in Orlando, is our experienced infrastructure, qualified crew members and companies that are dedicated to this industry with the credits to prove it," said Fowler.

One of the companies that helped put Orlando on the map as an industry hotspot is Universal Studios. Its production facility here opened in 1989 and today includes more than 100 backlot locations, state-of-the-art sound stages, and digital and analog broadcast studios.

"Orlando, and I'd like to think Universal too, has played a big role in creating a sustainable production community and center in Central Florida," says Pamela Tuscany, vice president of Universal Studios Florida Production Group. "But the foundation is only as good as its people." Tuscany thinks much of the area's success in the industry is due to its workforce. "The infrastructure is in place and the crew isn't shipped in from other cities. These people moved here, put their kids in school, and became part of the community because they knew they could find work."

Tuscany is referring to people such as Wayne Morris, a Hollywood producer who relocated to Celebration 12 years ago. Since then, he has brought several large projects to the area, including "Mortal Kombat: Conquest," a 22-episode series he produced for Warner Brothers and NewLine Cinema. In 2011, Morris started shooting "The Inbetweeners," an MTV original series that follows the misadventures of four high-school boys. He produced 11 episodes from August to October in locations throughout Orange County, including Dr. Phillips High School, where students were often used as extras.

"Orlando has a very unique culture in terms of cooperation and team building," Morris says. "It has an infrastructure that is found in very few cities. When you get all of these elements — technical and stagecraft equipment, a professional crew base — it makes for a much, much bigger picture." The series will premiere

this year and Morris hopes to shoot subsequent seasons in Central Florida.

Another one of the assets of Central Florida's infrastructure can be found on college campuses around Orlando. The Digital Animation and Visual Effects (DAVE) School, Full Sail University, the University of Central Florida and Valencia College all have impressive degree programs contributing to the talented workforce. "It's a win-win for productions who utilize the students in Central Florida; the students gain the opportunity to

work on a professional project and the production has the access to skilled and eager production assistants," says Fowler. Recently the independent film *Renee*, starring Kat Dennings and Chad Michael Murray, utilized students from all four schools to assist in the production of this Orlando-based film.

From the recently graduated to the seasoned professional, Orlando's production community is strong and seeks to continue producing content for screens of all sizes. 



IDEAS ORLANDO

**"Adventures to Fitness," IDEAS' animated series that encourages kids to lead healthy lives, is written, story boarded and shot in the company's downtown studio.**

## >> FUN FITNESS

With childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes rising at alarming rates, IDEAS' "Adventure to Fitness" animated video series couldn't have been developed at a better time.

Created, story boarded, and shot in IDEAS' downtown Orlando studio, the videos blend a 30-minute workout with lessons in geography, science, social studies, language arts, and health. Mr. Marc Mark, the show's enthusiastic host, transports kids across the world for adventures that encourage them to get out of their seats, run in place, and do different exercises, such as pretending to climb or row a boat.

"The mission of the show is to inspire children to lead healthy lifestyles through imagination, education, and movement," says IDEAS President John Lux. To date, 26 episodes have been produced and made available online for teachers to download for free, and more than 2 million students in grades K-5 have viewed them.

"Fourteen months ago, "Adventure to Fitness" was in 50 schools in one state, and now it's in 4,400 schools in all 50 states," says Lux. The videos stealthily combine exercise with learning, and kids love it. While the series is on hold as it awaits additional funding, teachers are clamoring for more episodes.

"The show is fun, it fulfills a huge health and fitness need, and continues to educate the students," adds Lux. "Our goal is to produce episodes for the next five years, and the feedback we get from the schools is that they would love to have that."

For more information on "Adventure to Fitness," visit [ideasorlando.com](http://ideasorlando.com).