

Toronto's Film Production Industry Goes Green

Grass-Roots Green-Screen Initiative Widely Embraced

TORONTO, September 11, 2007 – A Green-Screen coalition of Toronto-based film industry associations and service providers today announced a bold initiative to make Toronto a leader in “greening” the film production industry. The Green-Screen initiative rationally identifies and endorses a set of environmentally sustainable standards and recommendations for all productions shooting in Toronto from small documentaries and independent films to mega budget blockbusters.

“Toronto’s Green-Screen initiative will be one of the most comprehensive in the world” said Melissa Morgan of IATSE 873’s Environmental Committee and a coalition member. “A Best Practices Guide will help film productions by offering alternative practices that can reduce their carbon foot-print at every level of production, and a Resource Guide will help them find green services and products locally”.

Toronto’s Green-Screen initiative will go even further by implementing a certification program to measure and recognise the efforts of individual productions to reduce their impact on the environment. “While production costs are always a concern to producers, there are many ways that productions can reduce their impact without adding costs” said Toronto Film Studios president Ken Ferguson. “For instance, switching from halogen to florescent lighting in production offices, shutting off idling vehicles and switching to refillable water bottles actually saves money. All of these initiatives make a difference if we embrace them collectively.”

Other green practices that are now being encouraged include use of low VOC paints, on-set food served in biodegradable rather than Styrofoam containers, rental of hybrid automobiles for production use, composting of food wastes, double-sided photocopying and selective distribution of copies to save paper, reduced use of the tropical hardwood lauan for set construction, and reclamation of set-building materials which often are dumped into landfill.

To date, its founding partners have contributed over \$100,000 and the group is seeking additional funding from provincial government programs to further support its efforts. “There has been an overwhelming show of support for this initiative by Toronto’s screen-based industries” said coalition member Candida Paltiel of Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival. “Greening of the film industry is no longer just a suggestion; it is now a serious mission that Toronto’s Green-Screen initiative is helping to vault into the realm of mainstream film and television production.”

Already the Green-Screen mandate is getting support from major productions. Marvel Studio’s *The Incredible Hulk*, which is in production in Toronto, has embraced green practices and is sharing its experience with the coalition. “We congratulate this group’s achievements in coming together with such a comprehensive initiative,” said *The Incredible Hulk* producer Gale Anne Hurd. “Making films in a more earth-friendly manner is very important to many producers. Most of us already employ green practices at home; bringing the same environmental consciousness to the workplace is the logical next step.”

Toronto’s Green-Screen initiative will be featured during a panel on “Going Green in the Film Industry” at the Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival in Toronto October 24 to 28. The festival showcases film and video focusing on environmental themes and this year will be presenting its first carbon-neutral entries.

Backgrounder

The Green-Screen coalition was forged by the passion of its members for both the environment and addressing climate change. Initially the Environment Committee of film technicians' union IATSE 873 came together in discussions with Toronto Film Studios (TFS), builders of the mega-stage project in the port lands known as FILMPORT. The IATSE committee was researching sustainable best practices in film production and was curious about proposed greening strategies for FILMPORT. With TFS working on many green initiatives of their own ranging from high-efficiency mechanical systems to bio-swales for storm water treatment to sophisticated recycling systems, the two parties found they had much in common. They quickly concluded that the time was right to create an industry-wide initiative.

By coincidence, *The Incredible Hulk*, which is currently in production in Toronto, approached TFS to bring about some changes on their studio lot to enhance the production's greening efforts. The cast and crew of *The Incredible Hulk* have since adopted a vigorous program to reduce the film's impact on the environment.

As momentum built, other organizations were welcomed to the table including Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival, a major Canadian environmental film festival that showcases ecological themes and subjects, and Green Reel, a consultant to industry on sustainable film production. Before long, word of the initiative spread throughout the industry and was greeted with an enthusiastic response. It is the film community's collective desire for Toronto to be a leader in the greening of the film and creative arts industries with a made-in-Toronto green initiative that sets the bar for others.

The Green-Screen coalition aims to meet these goals by becoming an industry-based association for the purpose of research and promotion of best practices in the film and television and creative arts sector in Toronto, with a certification program to recognise and reward success by individual productions.

The initial members who have contributed funds and/or services to kick-start Toronto's Green-Screen initiative are:

- IATSE 873
- Toronto Film Studios / FILMPORT
- Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival
- City of Toronto Film & Television Office
- Deluxe
- FilmOntario
- Panavision
- DGC Ontario
- Comweb / William F. White International
- CFTPA
- ACTRA
- P.S. Production Services
- NABET 700

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