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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2026

Film Industry Generated Significant Impact for Champaign County Region in 2025

Champaign, IL — Film production proved to be a powerful economic driver for Champaign County and the surrounding region, generating millions in local spending, supporting jobs, and strengthening Illinois' creative economy, according to new 2025 economic impact data released by Film Champaign-Urbana.

In 2025, film productions based in Champaign, Ford, and Piatt Counties generated **\$12.3 million in statewide business sales**, driven by **\$6.3 million in direct in-state production spending** at hotels, catering, transportation providers, rental housing, equipment vendors, and post-production services. That activity resulted in **\$7.8 million added to Illinois' gross domestic product** and **\$1.61 million in paychecks for Illinois households**, supporting the equivalent of **71 full-time jobs across the state**.

The Champaign County area alone captured a significant share of that activity, with **\$3.78 million in total local spending**, including **\$1.625 million in labor costs paid directly to Champaign County residents**. These productions employed local crew and extras while also supporting indirect jobs across hospitality, retail, logistics, and creative services.

"Film production brings immediate and measurable benefits to our local economy," said Mark Brown, Director of Event Services and Film for Experience Champaign-Urbana. "From hotel rooms and catering to wages paid to local crew, these projects create real opportunities for our residents and businesses while showcasing Champaign County as a dynamic place to work and create."

Momentum is expected to accelerate in 2026 following recent enhancements to the **Illinois Film Production Tax Credit**, signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker in December 2025. The updated program increases the base tax credit to **35% on qualified Illinois expenditures**, up from 30%, and continues to offer an **additional 5% credit on Illinois resident wages for productions filming outside the Chicago-area collar counties**—a competitive advantage that directly benefits Champaign County.

These improvements strengthen Illinois' position as a film-friendly state and make downstate communities increasingly attractive to filmmakers seeking diverse locations, experienced crews, and cost-effective production environments.

"Champaign County is uniquely positioned to capitalize on these expanded incentives," explains Jennifer Shelby, co-owner at Flyover Film Studios. "With established production companies, an



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indoor soundstage at Flyover Film Studios, and a growing local workforce, we are already seeing increased interest and production activity in 2026 and beyond.”

Flyover Film Studios continues to host events to engage the public and filmmakers to showcase the industry in the region. This Saturday, January 17, they will host The 2026 Filmworkers Expo at the Rantoul Business Center from 12:00–4:00 p.m., with education, gear swaps, information on careers in the industry, activities for kids, and much more. Registration/tickets are required at <https://www.flyoverfilmstudios.com/event-details/the-2026-filmworkers-expo-01-17>.

Film Champaign-Urbana, the official film office for Champaign County and a division of Experience Champaign-Urbana, supports productions at every stage—offering location scouting, permitting guidance, crew and vendor connections, and coordination with municipalities and property owners to ensure smooth, efficient shoots.

As Illinois’ film incentives grow stronger, Experience Champaign-Urbana expects the film industry to continue to drive meaningful economic impact while elevating the region’s visibility on screens large and small nationwide.

For more information about filming in Champaign County, contact Film Champaign-Urbana at experiencecu.org/film.

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About the Champaign County Film Office

Established in 2015, the Champaign County Film Office assists film productions in location scouting, permitting, and additional needs to ensure successful filming that benefits the greater Champaign-Urbana area. The Film Office maintains a locations database and connects residents, businesses, and service providers interested in involvement in the film industry with productions occurring in the area. Learn more at experiencecu.org/film.