

Re: *Green-Screen Toronto*

Toronto Film Studios has been asked by the Environmental Committee of IATSE 873 to help launch their Toronto Green Film Platform, an environmentally conscious initiative to put Toronto on the leading edge of green and sustainable film production. Al Gore has raised the level of awareness within the entertainment industry and now film commissions in other jurisdictions, including NYC, have begun to announce *Green Screen* programs. Toronto, a long-standing centre of film production excellence, should be a leader in this initiative!

Background

Sustainable (“green”) practices have been adopted in many industries, particularly the manufacturing and construction industries, for some time but, for various reasons, the film industry has altered few of its wasteful habits. *An Inconvenient Truth* and Al Gore’s sudden celebrity status has been a catalyst for change in Hollywood. In November 2006, UCLA released a study entitled “*Sustainability in the Motion Picture Industry*”. The objectives of the study were “to identify existing environmental best practices within the industry, to develop a “green production guide” based on those practices, and to organize forums for disseminating the findings to the motion picture industry”. Since then, several Hollywood studios and film centres have begun to promote environmentally friendly production practices.

Early this year, several IATSE 873 members under co-chairs Melissa Morgan and Jacqui Hemingway began to probe what could be done to make Toronto’s film production industry greener. Their stated mission is “to research, imagine and facilitate economically viable ways to make motion picture production in Toronto environmentally sustainable”. In the course of their work, they approached TFS to learn what was being planned at FILMPORT. This was a welcomed enquiry, as many energy efficient and sustainable initiatives will be implemented at FILMPORT, although we were sceptical that production tenants would care. TFS has long been concerned about waste on the studio lot, whether due to cars idling for hours, lumber from film sets crushed into 40-yard bins, loading doors propped open letting heat or a/c escape, or florescent lights turned off in favour of high-wattage, halogen lights. We were delighted to learn that IATSE’s Environmental Committee shared our concerns.

In June, this Environmental Committee hosted a well-attended workshop at TFS with the paint Department where presentations were made by suppliers about low VOC paints, paint disposal practices and paint recycling. TFS made a presentation on FILMPORT’s green initiatives. The Committee met later with TFS to discuss specific design aspects of the paint facilities planned at FILMPORT. As a result of this meeting, TFS committed to assist the IATSE Environmental Committee in reaching its goal of promoting a green program within Toronto’s film production industry.

While this is a grass-roots initiative, the interest from Hollywood is evidenced by a parallel initiative on our lot. Gayle Anne Hurd, Executive Producer of *The Incredible Hulk* and an endorser of the UCLA sustainability study has approached TFS to put into place several new practices on the lot to reduce the environmental impact of her production and others. Gayle has emphasised that these initiatives are of utmost importance to the film’s producers and star, Ed Norton. What better sign that a *Green Screen* program for Toronto’s film industry is timely.

Coordinating a *Green-Screen Toronto* Initiative

A credible *Green-Screen* program requires buy-in from all facets of the production industry including unions and guilds, production and post production facilities, suppliers, service providers, industry associations and government. A first step in organizing a *Green-Screen Toronto* program would be to assemble a round-table of stakeholders. Toronto Film Studios and the IATSE Environmental Committee will co-host an open workshop to bring stakeholders together. The workshop will offer opportunity for discussion on:

- establishment of environmental committees in other unions and guilds similar to the IATSE 873 committee;
- establishment of an industry-wide Sustainable Practices Committee;
- researching sustainable practices being employed by other filmmaking jurisdictions;
- development of a draft *Green-Screen Toronto* document for consideration by the industry as a whole;
- announcing and promoting Toronto's Green Screen commitment in time the TIFF or, at the latest, in time for Mayor Miller's visit to Hollywood in October; and
- recognition for productions, facilities and companies that excel in *Green Screen* practices.

The workshop is planned for:

Wednesday, July 25, 2007
3:30 p.m.
Toronto Film Studios; Out-Takes Café
629 Eastern Avenue

This workshop is open to all interested film personnel and service companies.

Kindly RSVP to TFS at 416-406-1235