

## **Province ups film funding**

Kamloops This Week  
April 9, 2006

The British Columbia government will be providing regional film commissions in the province with funding increases and a new method for delivering those funds.

Olga Ilich, minister for Tourism, Sport and the Arts, announced the increases last week and says her government will provide \$275,000 to the Regional Film Commission. The money represents a boost of \$75,000 to local commission coffers. Under the new framework laid out by the Liberals, the funding will no longer be broken up into five regions.

Instead, the eight commission offices will be granted individual funding.

"Our film industry is growing - not just in the Lower Mainland, but across the province," said Ilich. "As government, we need to be responsive to changes in our film and television industry . . . funding will strengthen regional film offices' capacity to showcase their regions to the best competitive advantage and expand opportunities for motion picture production in all areas of the province."

According to the ministry, funding throughout the province will be maintained or increased. Additional funding will be made available to help inventory areas previously without direct financial support. These include areas of the Fraser Valley, the Sunshine Coast and the Sea to Sky Corridor.

The money will go towards assisting regional film commissions in the expansion of the province's digital locations library, something Thompson-Nicola film commission executive director Victoria Weller says is needed.

"Most of the money will go towards hiring additional location scouts throughout the TNRD and for inputting the images into a locations database."

Weller says her office alone has a backlog of more than 1,000 locations that have yet to be inputted into the database.

Under the new deal, the Thompson-Nicola Film Commission will receive an additional \$5,000 a year, bringing the yearly total to \$30,000, which will be maintained for the next three years. Describing the Thompson-Nicola Film Commission as "one of the leanest in the province," Weller says the money will be put to good use.

"Each one of those [backlogged] locations has about 20 images to be inputted, along with all the information required to go with each picture.

"It just goes on and on," says Weller, laughing.

"British Columbia is an internationally competitive motion picture production centre with tremendous professional and human resources, strong infrastructure and a world of looks," said British Columbia film commissioner Susan Croome.

"Regional film commissions play an important role in ensuring that the entire province is supportive of motion picture production activity and work diligently to ensure that all of B.C.'s spectacular locations are shown to their best advantage."

2005 saw film and television production in the province increase by more than 50 per cent from the previous year, contributing \$1.2 billion to the B.C. economy.

British Columbia is the continent's third-largest film production centre, trailing only New York and Los Angeles.