

Konrad Jackson

From: Bradford Jackson <getjackedbyjackson@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 10:21 AM
To: Konrad Jackson
Subject: Film Incentive

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I Bradford Jackson am a proud member of the Screen Actors Guild. Ever since I was young boy I had dreams of becoming an actor and making movies, growing up in a poor family with little money and my father serving his country away from home quite often sometimes that dream seemed more than distant. I was unable to attend acting classes due to money needs for our family until I was 18, when I entered college. It was there I learned everything about acting on stage and most importantly to me, in front of a camera! I was seeking out everything I could for more Film, for this was my calling, my dream, and my passion. But living here in Alaska I wasn't sure I would find much....To my ultimate surprise, I found not another person, not a few people, not a dozen, but well over a hundred people in Anchorage, Alaska alone who all had the same dream and passion as I did! To make Films!!! Since then I have had the honor to be in such films as 'Christmas with a Capitol C', 'The Frozen Ground'(with Nicolas Cage), and 'Wildlike', I received my Screen Actors Guild card and my dream seems to be getting closer and closer everyday...I have the production companies and crews that came up to Alaska to film their movies to thank, but most importantly I have the Alaskan Film Industry and all of it's independent hard working, passionate, loving, kind-caring, talented, rockstar filmmakers to truly thank! Because of them they made me who I am today and they have set in stone my dreams in my heart that will never die. You have more than a dozen Alaskan independent production companies, over two hundred independent actors and growing, you have writers, producers, editors, special F/X teams, and directors all willing to bend over backwards to make movies here in Alaska. This city is being run by filmmakers who are working their asses off at a 9-5 job or more so they can have money to make movies in the evening...don't take that away from them. Long live the Film Industry in Alaska!

Konrad Jackson

From: cypharius@gmail.com on behalf of D.K. Johnston <dk.trisevenpictures@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 10:44 AM
To: Konrad Jackson
Subject: Updated Alaska Filmmaker Testimony
Attachments: Alaska Filmmakers Testimony.pdf

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Konrad,

I've been told you are preparing the informational packets for the Labor & Commerce Committee hearings, and i wanted to send to you an updated version of the testimony I will be looking to present today. I'm representing a number of filmmakers who are working in the field right now, and are unable to attend. After my initial email I was contacted by several others, who I have asked me to speak for them as well.

Attached is an updated document for the committee's review.

Sincerely,

D.K. Johnston
Tri-Seven Pictures
907-440-2641
dkjohnston.com
alaskafilmmakers.com
Anchorage, AK

"Everyone has a story to tell" - Alaska Filmmakers

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3-14-13

Dear Labor + Commerce Committee

I wanted to let you know that my business has benefited from the film industry. We had a full length film + several commercials that were filmed in the valley, they used hotel rooms + catering services. Usually it was our off season so that income was very welcome. Just wanted to let you know there are benefits from the film industry.

Sincerely

Janet Kinead

Janet Kinead
Colony Inn
Valley Hotel

Konrad Jackson

From: Jonathan Butzke <jon@talkingcirclemedia.com>
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 5:19 PM
To: House Labor and Commerce
Subject: HB 112 testimony clarification

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Committee Chair Olson,

Thank you for following my testimony today.

In my testimony I stated:

"to date only around \$9 Million in Film Tax Credits has been redeemed by Alaska Corporations",

This was called in question by one of the HLAC members, with the statement that to date \$35 Million in Film Tax Credits has been issued.

The fact is both statements are true.

Any amount of tax credits can be issued, but only a real cash value is realized by the State of Alaska Treasury, when an Alaskan Corporation redeems the Film Tax Credit, which they would have had purchased from the Original Film Tax Credit Holder, at a non-disclosed less than "face value" amount.

Please contact me for any future clarification on my testimony, or understanding, of the Film Tax Credit Bill.

Jonathan Butzke

Owner & Manager Talking Circle Media

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5630 B Street

Anchorage, AK USA

99518

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Konrad Jackson

From: Karen Casanovas <karenbethdesign@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 3:05 PM
To: kurt.olson@akleg.gov; Konrad Jackson; Tyra Smith-MacKinnon; bob.herron@akleg.gov; Rob Earl; Jeff Turner; lora.reinbold@akleg.gov; Robin Sahnnow; dan.saddler@akleg.gov; Kim Skipper; Rep. Andy Josephson
Subject: HB 112 - URGENT MESSAGE

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DEAR ALL:

Please read the attached letter. It is imperative you understand that many, many businesses will be affected by the passage of this repeal of the Alaska Film Tax Incentive Program. Here are a few:

- Hotels
- Car Rentals
- Real Estate Agents
- Graphic Design Businesses
- Car painters
- Auto detailers
- Propane companies
- Warehouse rentals
- Lumber yards
- Floral shops
- Snowmachine rentals
- Motorcycle chops
- Boat rentals
- Airplane rentals
- Antique Dealers
- Auto glass repair shops
- Furniture stores
- Tire shops
- Safety equipment businesses
- Water suppliers
- Rent-a-cans
- Prop houses
- Art galleries
- Restaurants / Bars
- Lighting businesses
- Camera rental businesses
- Tour companies
- Personal care facilities (hair, nail, massage services)
- Outdoor gear sales
- Locksmiths
- Gym memberships
- Yoga studios
- Gift shops
- Jewelry / Fur stores

- Retail stores
- Big Box stores
- Electronic suppliers
- Rugs / Carpet stores
- Tile businesses
- Wallpaper / Drapery shops
- Thrift stores
- Food Wholesalers
- Local coffee suppliers
- Non profits
- Photo shops
- Fiberglass businesses
- Lexicon / plexiglass stores
- Fabric stores / embroidery shops
- Clothing stores
- Make up counters
- Wig / Hair suppliers

These are just a FEW of the ancillary services that a FILM or TV project supports.

Please don't kill the Tax Incentives. It is my livelihood!

Karen Casanovas
Chugiak / Eagle River constituent
karenbethdesign@gmail.com

Konrad Jackson

From: Rep. Kurt Olson
Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2013 1:18 PM
To: Konrad Jackson
Subject: FW: Film Tax Credits

From: Quinton Smith [<mailto:gosmith@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 8:03 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson; Kim Skipper; Rep. Andy Josephson
Subject: Film Tax Credits

Hello,

My name is Quinton Oliver Smith, from Eagle River, Alaska. I wanted to show my support for the film tax credit system in Alaska. As a sophomore at New Mexico State University, I've been incredibly fortunate to come into school with the film experience I've gained from Alaska film jobs. After completing my senior year of high school back in 2010, I got onto the set of Baby Geniuses. That experience has put me miles ahead of other students currently going to film school, already having real on set experience. Last summer, I was a Production Assistant on the pilot for "Alaskan Showdown" where I was then offered a job to do audio (a major step up the ladder) if the show got picked up.

Once I'm done with school, I want to come back up to Alaska to further my career in filmmaking, and the only way that would be possible is if the Legislature continues the film tax credits, or even enlarges them. As a citizen who sees the benefit of continuing these credits, I implore you to help the talented Alaskan filmmakers keep their jobs.

Sincerely,
Quinton Oliver Smith

MAR 15 2013

ANCHORAGE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us
907-269-0111/ phone, 907-269-0229/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Ron Holmstrom
REPRESENTING: SCREENACTORS GUILD & AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS
BILL#/ SUBJECT: H.R. 112
COMMITTEE &
HEARING DATE: LABOR & COMMERCE 3/15/2013

SINCE THE FILM PROGRAM BEGAN THE SAG-AFTRA MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ALASKAN ACTORS HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED. THE REPUTATION OF OUR POOL OF TALENT HAS BEEN GETTING AROUND IN HOLLYWOOD.

THAT THE HIGHER PAYING JOBS IN FILMS GO TO EXPERIENCED OUTSIDERS IS MUCH LIKE THE EARLY OIL INDUSTRY. ALSO LIKE THE OIL INDUSTRY, ALASKANS ARE NOW BEGINNING TO WIN THE BIGGER ROLES & BETTER PAYING JOBS AS THEY BECOME BETTER TRAINED. PRODUCTION COMPANIES ARE HAVE BEGUN TO RECOGNIZE THE WEALTH OF TALENT IN OUR STATE.

WHEN I WAS HIRED AS ACTOR FOR LOCATIONS OUTSIDE OF HOLLYWOOD, I DON'T RECALL EVER WORKING WITH ACTORS FROM THE STATE WHERE WE WERE SHOOTING. I WAS AMAZED AT THE NUMBER OF ACTORS FROM MY ALASKA THEATRE COMMUNITY ON THE FILMS SHOOTING HERE. LASTLY, A LOT OF US ARE ALREADY RECEIVING RESIDUAL CHECKS FOR THE FILMS WE HAVE ACTED IN HERE. LET'S KEEP THE JOBS COMING & GROW AN INDUSTRY.



March 14, 2013

Honorable Kurt Olson
Chairman
House Labor and Commerce Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Olson:

Please accept this correspondence as written testimony for the House Labor and Commerce Committee hearing on HB 112.

As you know, I am the president of Pfeffer Development, LLC, a commercial real estate development firm based in Anchorage. A few of the projects I have developed over the years include: Anchorage Rental Car Center, Downtown Fire Station No. 1, Anchorage City Hall, medical office buildings for Providence and Alaska Regional Hospitals, The Surgery Center of Fairbanks, and several buildings for Alaska Native Corporations such as NANA Development Corporation and Afognak Native Corporation. I was also co-developer of the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center and Linny Pacillo Multi-use Parking Facility.

Although you and I understand that the natural beauty of Alaska and our welcoming people should be enough to draw and keep the film and television industry here, the truth is, they have only visited our state. A few Hollywood films like "Big Miracle" and "Frozen Ground" have used our tax incentive program, and given us a small taste of the economic multiplier and job generation engine that feature film production can provide. While it's true that no significant feature film was made in Alaska in 2012, I have been talking with professionals in the industry and have reason to believe this lull can and will be turned around.

My reason for submitting testimony for HB 112 is strictly business: the business of taking a promising manufacturing industry to the next level. That is exactly how a film production manager described his industry to me. Film may be a creative business, but production is manufacturing: building, painting, rigging, electrical work, demolition: lots of jobs for lots of trades, not to mention purchase of local materials and supplies, and buying of services such as catering, hotel and auto rentals, and increased restaurant and retail spending. As a real estate developer, I see this as a legitimate industry that will help spur economic activity to the benefit of businesses of all kinds, including mine.

In fact, my initial interest in the film production industry began with a most unusual business proposition. Two years ago, I was approached by film producers about using my home as a primary location for what turned out to be the movie “Beyond” starring Jon Voight. As luck would have it, my family and I were planning to be out of town much of the time they wanted to film, so we agreed to turn over the keys. Through this experience, I saw firsthand how many people and resources are needed to manufacture a film and I realized how important it is that we make sure this stays a LOCAL industry – not one where all the crew and equipment are brought in from the lower 48 and then sent home when the filming ends.

As I have thought about it since then, I have concluded that, like a three-legged stool, three strong legs are necessary to support the development of this local industry into a provider of steady employment and purchaser of goods and services.

1. The first leg is a Reliable Tax Credit program.

- As you know, in 2012 the Alaska Legislature extended the Alaska Film Production Tax Credit Program through 2023. Signed into Law by Governor Parnell on May 30, 2012, this legislation provides an additional \$200 million in tax credits and makes other changes to the program that will go into effect on July 1, 2013. Until then, the program established in 2008 remains in effect.
- These credits are not only helpful, but CRITICAL for Alaska, as a relative newcomer, to be competitive with other states and countries whose film commissions are working very hard to provide a number of incentives to attract the economic activity and tourism exposure that come with significant feature film and TV series production.
- With the legislature having just completed all the hard work required to evaluate, adjust and extend the program, this is no time to reject all of that work before it even goes into effect. A year’s exposure to industry feedback may have provided insights into issues that bear a tweak or two, but for the legislature to consider killing the program the very year after its extension, sends a message of unreliability this developing industry cannot afford to have in L.A.

2. The second leg is a strong Trained Crew base.

- I have been told that Alaska already has a workforce of some 80 talented, experienced local crew who are ready and willing to work on significant projects. And if the other two legs are strong, this number can grow to the couple hundred crew needed to allow feature productions to staff with as many Alaskans as possible. A number of workforce development initiatives and programs have already begun to bear fruit in a variety of trades, but we need the program to continue, and we need the third leg of the stool to keep our growing crew base supplied with a steady stream of jobs

3. The third leg is a full complement of Suitable Production Facilities.

- A number of companies have invested some significant money in well-equipped, but relatively modest scale production facilities in Alaska. But the lack of just one conveniently-located, large, feature-scale soundstage facility has undercut our

incentive by keeping Alaska a make-shift “third-world” location for any really significant scale production.

- I have heard that even producers who loved shooting here have put out the word that shooting in Alaska, without a suitable facility and the number of experienced local crew that only such a steady workplace will support, is an expensive challenge. What’s more, it limits the proportion of the tax incentive’s “Alaska spend” that remains here, as opposed to being used on personnel and equipment brought north and sent south again afterward. Targeted capital investment in Alaska-based facilities will provide long-term economic benefits and jobs.
- I may even be able to help solve the missing third leg problem, but only if we still have a Reliable Tax Credit program.

Alaska does have comparative and competitive advantages for film production, just as it has for production of oil, zinc and wild salmon. But just as those industries require a partnership with the State, particularly in the start-up phase, so does film production, which also offers significant long-term economic and non-economic benefits to the people of Alaska.

In conclusion, through the Alaska Film Production Incentive Program, we have an opportunity to support economic development by diversifying our economy and growing a NEW manufacturing industry – one where the Alaska film production thrives, talent stays in-state and new jobs are created. This program is good for Alaska business, and as a long-time Alaska business person, I urge you to support its continuation.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Pfeffer
President
Pfeffer Development, LLC



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March 15, 2013

Representative Kurt Olson
Chairman, Labor and Commerce Committee
House of Representatives
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 24
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Olson:

I am writing to state my organizations opposition against HB 112, "An Act repealing the film production tax credit."

The mission of the Anchorage Economic Development Corp. (AEDC) is to grow and diversify the Anchorage economy, and although AEDC's mission is narrowly focused on Anchorage, we know that a more robust, diversified state economy is an integral part of achieving our mission. The Alaska film industry has done just that.

In February 2011, AEDC released an economic impacts study of the movie *Big Miracle*. *Big Miracle* had a significant economic impact on Anchorage and a lesser, though noteworthy impact, on Barrow and other parts of the state. The production spent \$7.7 million on goods and services with Alaska companies and an additional \$4 million on payroll and benefits to Alaska residents who worked on the film as either cast or crew. The production generated an average of \$285,000 for each of the 58 days of filming and included more than 1,300 Alaskans. Adding the indirect and induced effects to the direct spending generated an estimated total economic impact of \$16.5 million. There can be no question that the economic impact of the film industry on our economy is substantial.

One of the things heard multiple times from producers was that they want to shoot their films in Alaska, but will go to other states or countries that offer the most competitive environment for total cost of production. We supported the passage of SB 23 in the 27th Legislature, which passed with 37 Yeas and 2 Nays. Its passage clearly established

the agreement that we want to continue to make Alaska an attractive place for producers to shoot their films. With the extension of the program through 2023 and an increase of \$200 million in tax credits, Alaska is one of those competitive environments.

However, HB 112 threatens to eliminate a valuable piece of our state economy. Our sentiments are echoed in the numerous letters already submitted by Alaskan business owners who have stated their businesses would suffer severe repercussions if HB 112 is passed. A diversified economy is a stable economy, and if successful programs, such as the Alaska Film Tax Incentive Program, are eliminated, what other valuable programs will also be at risk in the future? We cannot grow our economy with a backwards approach that eliminates jobs, business opportunities and investments in Alaska.

It is with these concerns that AEDC opposes HB 112.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bill Popp', with a large, sweeping initial 'B'.

Bill Popp
President & CEO



To Members of the Labor and Commerce Committee,

I'm here today in representation of several community organizations including Alaska Filmmakers (Also Known as AKF), The Alaska Actors Network, and the Alaska Film Forum. All of these organizations have helped to educate, encourage, and showcase the growing number of talented storytellers working to build and maintain a professional production industry created by the Alaska Film Tax Incentive Program.

I am also here to represent a number of my fellow filmmakers who could not be here, but have asked me to speak on their behalf. Many of these individuals could not be here today because they are out there on set, right now, taking part in the very industry, which is now being jeopardized by House Bill 112.

I have previously stated in numerous testimonies, and messages to both House and Senate committees over the past few years about the very creative and hard working film community here in Alaska. This incentive program provides our filmmakers with opportunities that would normally require all of them to relocate elsewhere in order to pursue their dreams and develop their talents. I ask you to not support the repeal of the Film Tax Credit, and instead support the growth of an industry that will only help further the creative minds of our storytellers both young and old.

The incentive program not only creates an opportunity for new sources of revenue in Alaska, but will also continue to provide a new source of jobs and creative opportunities for its residents. Now the bill in front of us today is sending a strong and unpleasant message to our production community. This bill, if enacted, would require those who wish to continue to build their lives and careers in the production field here in Alaska to relocate out of state in order to provide sufficient work and income to sustain their livelihood. We're not just talking about messing with people's pockets books here we're talking about families and communities of people who want to continue to do what they love in the place the place that they call home.

I have provided a document for all of you here containing this testimony as well as personal statements from those I speak for today. I sincerely hope you take these statements to heart when making your decision. Thank you.

D.K. Johnston – Assistant Director/Producer/PA/UAA Adjunct Professor

The following are testimonies I have received in response to HB112 from filmmakers either currently in the field or are unable to testify in person today on this matter.

-Michael Burn & Dean Q. Mitchell – Writers/Directors/Producers

"We are the Quake Brothers; Michael Burns and Dean Q. Mitchell. Our goal is, and has been, to make feature-length films, short films and documentaries in the state of Alaska utilizing only Alaskan talent. Without the tax incentive our goal may be ripped out from under us.

When the tax incentive initially passed we were developing a proposal for a feature-length film we had written called PROPER BINGE. We were going out on a limb; it was our first time attempting to make a commercially viable film and we really didn't have a clue as to where the money was going to come from to make it. The tax incentive seemed like it had the potential to really help us in our pursuit to gather funds.

After looking over our proposal the Alaska Film Office gave us the green light. Having a state authority recognize the fact that we had a serious project opened many doors for us.

Unfortunately, we were unable to raise the amount we needed to keep the qualification for the tax credits. Still, having pre-qualified, we were able to attract many serious filmmakers and movie enthusiasts. Professionals and amateurs volunteering their time and talents to an all Alaskan feature film, something they may not have had the chance to be a part of without the push of the tax incentive.

Throughout the summer of 2012 we worked with more than one hundred cast and crewmembers and approximately twenty-five local businesses. Each of them not only excited about the project but energized. Our crew came from as far out as Fairbanks, Girdwood and Anchorage for our twelve (plus) hour long shoots in Wasilla. If funds or a vehicle or any other filmmaking emergency came up, they chipped in without thinking twice. Some of the businesses actually closed down to accommodate our schedule. The City of Wasilla also assisted us on several occasions. Many of the filmmakers we met along the way were those that have let their skills go dormant due to the lack of a film industry in Alaska. Since our project, a lot of them have decided to continue the dream they long thought would never be fulfilled.

Working on a project like this gave us new insight on, not only how giving and respectful our fellow Alaskans are, but how vivacious they become when witnessing the growth of this new industry.

Our feature film, PROPER BINGE is nearly complete. We hope to premiere it at a top tier film festival, land a distribution deal, and we have high hopes to profit from it when all is said and done. All persons involved in PROPER BINGE are Alaska residents, which means any and all profits will go back into Alaska. The success we see from our

film will propel our next project and/or other's projects involving an all-Alaskan cast and crew. Without the film incentive in place, igniting a self-sustaining industry may not be possible.

All aspiring filmmakers in Alaska have had to ask themselves, at one time or another, "should I move to Los Angeles or New York to pursue my dream?" When truly, the question is, "Why can't I stay in Alaska to achieve my dream?" The right, well-written story has a good chance of becoming a great and successful movie no matter where it is filmed. The film incentive is reason enough for us, and for all local filmmakers to keep filming our stories in the state we love, Alaska.

Keep the dream alive."

-Michael Bergstrom – Producer/Grip/Electrician & Co-Founder of Electric Igloo

*"I work full time in film, with a focus on motion pictures and television. This last year found me as a producer on the popular TV show Coast Guard Alaska, a show that is taking advantage of the tax incentive. **Almost all the work I have had the last two years have been on productions utilizing the tax credit in some way, and I have been able to become a homeowner in the Chugiak area and put down even more permanent roots as I begin my more long term growth of my small business. HB112 threatens large stable productions that benefit businesses, both film and non-film related.**"*

-Levi Taylor – Writer/Director/Producer & Founder of Crooked Pictures LLC

"My name is Levi A. Taylor, I've been a filmmaker all my life. In 2007 I left my day job to pursue my life long dream of making films in my home, Alaska. You see, I have a story to tell, forged in the homes and families that make Alaska what it is today. A land of diversity in personality and rich with the gold I mine, Stories.

The Alaska film incentive program represents the best of what you, our elected officials can do, help foster industry but providing opportunity. The State audit on the Film incentive program proved that it is bringing money to the State. Additionally as a filmmaker, I can tell you that the Alaska Crew has grown in size and professionalism in a way that can only be achieved with experience.

*There are many filmmakers, my self included, that are working hard to bring more work to Alaska. Telling stories about the Last Frontier that celebrate the human spirit in the harshest of places. Concurrently many Alaskans are gaining experience by working and businesses are making money providing support to an industry. **Now is the time to show our support, to grow economic opportunity and foster a new industry that celebrates humanity, even against all odds, in the quest to tell stories from generation to generation.**"*

-Cedar Cussins – Gecko Services LLC & Alaska Actors Network

"I am writing to say that my family does not support HB 112, an attempt to repeal the film tax incentives. My husband and I own Gecko Services LLC. Two years ago, we were a small snow removal company. Then, my husband was lucky enough to get a job working on Big Miracle.

Big Miracle changed everything for us. With the money he made renting equipment and contracting to that one film, my husband was able to pay cash for a mini-excavator, a dump truck, an equipment trailer, and a skid-steer. Those four pieces of equipment catapulted him into being self-employed year-round. Our business is now thriving! Last year, our gross receipts doubled and we hired our first employees! This year, we are on track to break the record we set last year!

Film tax incentives and the movies they bring up here are good for our economy. They diversify our economy and they give people, like me and my husband, opportunities that we would not have otherwise.

It seems silly to think that one movie could change a person's life. Big Miracle changed our lives. I strongly support anything that encourages more projects like Big Miracle to come to Alaska."

-Shane Reeves – Production Assistant/Coordinator/Assistant Director

*"My wife and I are born and raised Alaskans. We love this state, and plan on living here for the rest of our lives. I attended college in California, but came back because this is where I want to be. I have worked in film production for the last 10 years, and because of the film incentive, I have been able to make a living on film and television productions made in Alaska. Over the years, I have gotten to know businesses and organizations around the state. I have become a point of contact for outside and international film companies around the state. I have had great opportunity here in my home state to learn and work with the best in the field. An opportunity that I thought would have been virtually impossible if I moved back home. I have also been able to connect small companies throughout the state with a significant amount of work needed by outside productions. These productions are filming in Alaska because of the film tax incentive program. **The work I have had due to the film incentive has allowed me to buy a starter home, obtain my business license, and my wife and I are able to stay in the place we love without having to relocate for production opportunities.** At this point in my career, I am not rich, but I am gaining the experience and training I need to continue growing. I would not be where I am today without the incentive. I am very proud to be part of an industry that seeks to capture why I love Alaska. The Film industry in Alaska supports all other industries in Alaska*

both big and small, telling the rest of the world how special this place is, especially to those of us who call it home. Tourism, fishing and hunting are huge industries here and the film incentive helps keep those industries alive."

-Michael Collier – Cinematographer/Producer & Owner Random Acronym

"I wish I could rise to testify in person about the harmful effects HB112 would have on a burgeoning industry, thousands of residents, and the State itself. If it should pass I will follow my trade wherever it takes me - even if that means out of the State I love and have called home for two-thirds of my life. Today I work to diversify our state's economy. It is working for thousands of regular Alaskans right now, and it will work for All Alaskans as the industry grows."

-Daniel Lee – Camera/Steady Cam Operator/Production & Art Assistant

"I'm a lifelong Alaskan, 3rd generation.

In 2009 I became a freelance cameraman and production person and I done pretty well. Since the film incentive bill passing I've been able to work consistently going from job to job, freelance, i.e. on my own. I own my car outright, I bought a house my job: freelance.

In 2012 I was hired as a Camera op on Coast Guard Alaska and worked on it for 9 solid months; a production made possible by the film incentive. This production's crew with the exception of 3 positions is all Alaskan.

I had a chance to be interviewed by the 1st Assistant Director for Big Miracle and he told me "It makes no sense to film this movie in Alaska, except for the incentive." We need Alaska to keep making sense. I worry that shutting down the incentive will force me out of state or out of work.

It seems to me we're calling something with a few rough spots that works: broken. Being a homeowner I run into these sorts of 'broken' things all the time and when I do, I fix them. Simply put: I want to work, and the incentive makes that possible to do so in Alaska."

-Christine Pomilla – Production Assistant/Coordinator/Assistant Director

*"Being able to work locally is important to me and the incentive program allows me to do that. **Working locally means I don't have to search out of state for work and potentially be away from my family for extended periods of time.** I can come home to my husband every night and not have to sleep in a strange place for days on end. I may not work often as a freelancer here in Alaska, but when I do, I love it. It's rare to be able to find a job doing what you are truly passionate about and actually enjoy going to work. For me, the film industry is that job and by taking away the incentive program, you would be taking away my opportunity to pursue what I am*

most passionate about. It's not about the money. It's about being able to work as much as possible in an industry that satisfies a passion of mine. I love what I do and don't want to be forced to stop doing it or to go somewhere else to find work. This industry not only brings jobs to filmmakers, but to many different local industries as well. I am proud to be a part of an industry that not only brings jobs to those who work in it, but also brings jobs to an entire community. The benefits of the incentive program are for more than just filmmakers. Let's keep it going. "

-Simon Keelan – Grip/Electrician & Member of IATSE Local 918

"The film industry is my life. My father helped to pioneer the industry here in Alaska and I want to some day pass that on to my children. The film industry enabled me to get a great house for my family, no longer relying on unpredictable apartment managers.

Will we ever be Hollywood? No. And thank goodness for that. We don't need to be Hollywood for this incentive to work. As a fellow Alaskan I'm sure you understand how unique and beautiful our home is. What better way to show it off than through film?

I worked on Everybody Loves Whales and saw first-hand how the tax incentive benefited the state. Do you have any idea how much cold-weather gear was purchased here at local shops during that movie? It was like a fashion show with these guys buying the next great piece of gear and showing it off on set the next day. Then there is all the food that was purchased for crew, transportation and housing. The tax incentive was what helped to bring it all here.

There were other projects that I worked on that all share similar stories, but the basic sentiment remains. The incentive works. Every out-of-town crew had the same thing to say, that the film follows the incentives. The decisions on where to shoot a project often land on the least expensive location.

I have focused my education and experience on this industry. I have traveled the state helping with classes to teach people interested in the industry. I am PROUD to be in this industry. If the tax incentive gets killed with HB 112, I will be forced to find other work and perhaps even go back to school for a different career. At 38 years of age, I'm not exactly a spring chicken anymore.

This isn't just about me. This is about family and friends. This is about the hard-working talent living here in Alaska. We all deserve a chance to make the state proud of what we can do. Please give us that chance."

-Tess Weaver – Production Hair-Makeup-Wardrobe/Production Assistant

"As someone who has established a successful career and business through the Alaska Film Incentive, I am in full support of our state's incentive program. A program that would suffer severe repercussions if HB 112 passes.

HB 112 would kill a new and developing sector of Alaska's economy that I have personally put my heart and soul into along with many other Alaskan film industry professionals. Not only are we living our dreams every day, we have also dedicated our time and skill sets to mentor and teach a handful of eager Alaskans wanting to be a part of and create a career through the film industry.

*As a costumer, I have the honor of creating amazing partnerships with local retail businesses. **Just the other day while shopping for a national commercial with a local production services company, I got to reminisce with the 6th Ave Outfitters team about the business brought to the store with productions like Big Miracle, Frozen Ground, and Wildlike.***

With film and commercial jobs booked all over our state, I myself have purchased thousands of dollars of outdoor gear, something I most likely would never have done when I was working retail at Nordstrom before the film incentive passed. I have also been able to pay off quite a bit of my college loan debt thanks to my credentials and paychecks from the film incentive! These stories are small examples of the millions of dollars invested in our state and local businesses through the film incentive.

The film incentive has given me such a great pride in being from and working in the state of Alaska! As a true networker and social butterfly, I am constantly connecting with new producers and directors as well as re-connecting with past producers, promoting our state and inviting them to check out the Film Office's website! When re-connecting with producers and talents I have had the honor of working with, they all say the same thing about our state: there is no place in the World like Alaska, and the amazing crew talent Alaska has to offer surpasses that of other states!

We have a truly wonderful and beneficial program going with the film incentive, let's keep it going and continue to build our state's economy and work force."

-Dan Redfield – Editor/Motion Graphics Designer

*"The film tax incentive has had a huge impact on not only a statewide level but also a personal level. I personally have been employed for many months because of out of state production companies coming to Alaska. It has helped me both professionally and financially. The experience I, and my colleges, have gained from past productions has helped make us more attractive to new potential productions, and helped pave the way for more work here in Alaska. The incentive has also had a huge trickle effect. **When production companies come to Alaska they spend money not only on crew but food, supplies, housing and more. Those expenses put money in the pockets of Alaskans, which in turn gets cycled through our local economy. That's why the tax incentive is not only good for me and my colleagues but good for Alaskans.**"*

-Joe Tapangco – Production Assistant/Assistant Director

"The Alaska Film Tax Incentive is the glue that keeps me working in, the State where I was born and raised, Alaska. Upon graduating from high school, there was no film program at the University of Alaska so I went out of State to gather an education. I was excited to come back to my home state to develop my career. Now I am disappointed to see that my dream of continuing to work here in Alaska is in jeopardy. Part of the industry is starting from the bottom. Working your way up is not a luxurious path. If the Alaska Film Tax Incentive dies, so does my future in the State where I grew up. Canada will not only steal Alaska's movies, but it's crew as well."

-Dave Fedorski – Production Sound Mixer/Owner of Artika Productions

"I've been employed on projects by a number of video/film production companies who's principal shooting was done in Alaska. One of these companies was shooting in Alaska simply because of the tax incentive while others hired me because I was an Alaskan resident who's employment offered them the benefits of the state tax incentive. These opportunities of employment have not only kept me in the State of Alaska but have brought me back a number of times after attempting to find employment else where. In my mind this has legitimized the opportunities Alaska can provide for me as a business owner and employee working in the video production industry."

*Employment on productions encouraged by the tax incentive offers Alaskan's not only the chance to earn money but to receive a video/film education most likely exceeding the ones offered by local universities. **The excitement sparked by more video and film productions being shot in Alaska has begun to, and will continue to, encourage aspiring video and film makers to reside and work in this state as opposed to searching elsewhere for education and employment.** The most obvious but also valuable result of this enthusiasm has been a dramatic increase in independently and locally produced video projects. These collaborative and ambition efforts by talented locals represent the groundwork for a legitimate video and film industry in the state of Alaska. Repealing the tax incentive at such an early stage in the growth of such a promising industry would be short sighted when considering the long-term losses for the Alaskan economy. I would be disappointed for the state of Alaska to see some of it's more passionate, ambitious and talented individuals leaving in search of locations which offered them better opportunities."*

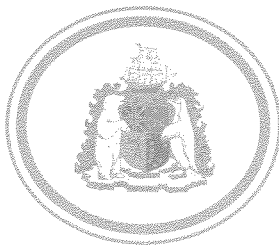
-Bradford Jackson – Actor/SAG Member & Founder of Rukus Productions

"I am a proud member of the Screen Actors Guild. Ever since I was young boy I had dreams of becoming an actor and making movies. Growing up in a poor family with little money, and my father serving his country away from home quite often, sometimes that dream seemed more than distant. I was unable to attend acting classes due to money needs for our family until I was 18, when I entered college. It was there I learned everything about acting on stage and most importantly to me, in front of a camera! I was seeking out everything I could for more Film, for this was my calling, my

dream, and my passion. But living here in Alaska I wasn't sure I would find much. To my ultimate surprise, I found not one, not a few people, not a dozen, but well over a hundred people in Anchorage, Alaska alone who all had the same dream and passion as I did! To make Films!!! Since then I have had the honor to be in such films as 'Christmas with a Capitol C', 'The Frozen Ground' (with Nicolas Cage), and 'Wildlike', I received my Screen Actors Guild card and my dream seems to be getting closer and closer everyday. I have the production companies and crews that came up to Alaska to film their movies to thank, but most importantly I have the Alaskan Film Industry and all of it's independent hard working, passionate, loving, kind-caring, talented, rockstar filmmakers to truly thank! They made me who I am today, and they have set in stone my dreams in my heart that will never die. You have more than a dozen Alaskan independent production companies, over two hundred independent actors and growing, you have writers, producers, editors, special F/X teams, and directors all willing to bend over backwards to make movies here in Alaska. This city is being run by filmmakers who are working a 9-5 job so they can have money to make movies in the evening...don't take that away from them. Long live the Film Industry in Alaska!"

-Erin Lindsay King – Actor/Production Assistant/Production Coordinator

"I was born and raised in Anchorage, left for college, then moved to New York City. When I moved back to Anchorage in 2010 I had no idea the opportunities that were in store for me in the film industry in Alaska. With the Alaska Film Tax Incentive I have been able to work production on 3 feature films, star as an actor and extra in various film productions, and acquire my Screen Actors Guild membership, something that actors in Los Angeles struggle towards for years. Without the tax incentive, none of this would have been possible. To kill this bill not only kills thousands of jobs and substantial economic growth, it kills the way of life for a community of incredibly talented artists. Lets continue to build what we started, and support our local art community... we have so many reasons to believe in them."



The hotel
Captain Cook

WALTER J. HICKEL, JR.
CHAIRMAN & CEO

939 WEST 5TH AVE., ANCHORAGE, AK 99501
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March 14, 2013

Dear Labor and Commerce Committee Members,

It has come to my attention that HB 112, introduced by Rep Stoltze, threatens to eliminate Alaska's Film Tax Credit Incentive Program, thereby killing this emerging industry before it ever gets a chance to fully develop. I know first-hand, the film industry has had a positive economic impact on my community. In fact, a 2012 Legislative Audit of the program showed a \$2 increase in economic output for every \$1 of tax credit issued by the State.

I also understand that tax credits are awarded only after the conclusion of filming, after dollars have circulated through the economy and all those dollars are verified by an independent, state certified CPA.

If HB 112 should pass business will suffer:

- **HB112 would kill the film industry** resulting in a loss of revenue to company's and eliminate jobs for Alaskans.
- The film program is vital to Alaska and eliminating it before allowing it to go into effect is a major setback.
- Millions have already been invested in a sound stage, trucks and equipment**how do we recover from this investment?**
- Hundreds of Alaskans have been trained and others are scheduled to be trained...**how does the future look for our emerging workforce?**
- Alaskan companies see tax relief by purchasing tax credits, allowing for new investments and new jobs for the Alaskan workforce.

The global film industry is extremely competitive. **HB112 has sent a chill through the industry.** Productions searching around the world for a reliable, stable environment are now looking at Alaska as unstable and too risky to invest with the possibility of the new 10-year program being repealed before it even goes into effect, producers will simply not invest time/energy or money into future projects in Alaska.

Economic diversification is good for everyone. This bill will eliminate the Alaska Film Incentive program, decrease efforts to diversify our economy, eliminate jobs and discourage those hoping to invest in careers and business opportunities that support economic growth in Alaska. It is crucial that HB112 not be allowed to move forward.

Thank you for your time with this important issue....

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wally Hickel Jr.".
Walter J. Hickel Jr.

MAR 15 2013

Thank you for taking time to allow public testimony on this very important topic. I am the owner and manager of Talking Circle Media. My company is an Alaskan Film, Television, and Video Production company. I began this career here in Alaska in 1984. And then started my own company in 1989 in Anchorage. I currently have 6 full-time employees, but have had as many as 17 part-time persons under my hire. I am here today to voice my opinion Against HB112, And urge all House of Rep. members to either Kill Bill HB112 or vote against it.

My company has experienced gross revenues of around \$500,000 spent by outside film and TV companies, directly related to the Film tax Credit. This is over the previous 5 years. Even this week I am either renting out camera equipment or crew people on Film tax credit related projects as we speak. The current film tax credit brings money not only to my staff and their families, but Millions of dollars in income to hundreds of non-video related companies all over Urban and Rural Alaska.

Last session I testified in agreement that the previous film tax credit needed revisions, and with the stewardship of the last legislation, those revisions were made after much public discussion. And with good judgment, the House and Senate body passed the revised film tax credit bill. With its new restrictions, truly is a local jobs creation bill.

So I am very confused that anyone in this current House body would present HB112, which desecrates all the work everyone put into crafting the new film tax credit bill that starts this summer.

I believe HB112 is based on misguided information, which is being by presented to the House leaders by biased individuals who have no first hand knowledge of the success of the film tax credit.

The State of Alaska costs almost no public Money, but has seen over \$110 Million spent in Alaska from Film and TV companies in Alaska, at the current costs of only around \$9 Million in tax credits redeemed by corporations, in the past 5 years. And there are dozens of Film companies that spend lot's of money in Alaska, that applied for film tax credits, but because of various reasons they decided to never finish the process to be issued a Film Tax Credit Voucher.

I would call the Film tax credit a pretty good return on investment.

Again, I am here today to voice my opinion Against HB112, And urge all House of Rep. members to either Kill Bill HB112 or vote against it. Thank you and please ask me any questions.

Jonathan Butzke
Owner, Talking Circle Media
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907-317-4126

PERSPECTIVE

THE JOURNAL OF THE ART DIRECTORS GUILD



US \$6.00

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2012



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COVER: The richly nuanced image on the cover is not a digital rendering, but neither is it purely a traditional photograph. It is an HDR, a high dynamic range photograph created by Production Designer Dave Blass of his Audrey's Bar set, built on location in Green Valley, CA, for the FX series JUSTIFIED. HDR manipulation is available on the iPhone and in Photoshop CS5®, but Blass likes the simplicity and options of Photomatix, a dedicated program by HDRsoft. He writes, "It works great in low-light situations—which is a plus—because getting sets lighted properly without a crew standing in the way is nearly impossible."

Playing Chess in ALASKA



by Nelson Coates, Production Designer

My Alaskan film adventure began in mid-May of 2010 with a trip to Anchorage (to assess location and facility options, and meet potential crew) and then on to Barrow, some seven hundred and twenty miles north, in a tiny eight-passenger airplane, crossing over the Brooks Range to the edge of the Arctic Ocean to do research and get a flavor of the real places depicted in *Big Miracle*, set in Barrow circa 1988. The screenplay was based on Ted Rose's 1989 book, *Freeing the Whales: How the Media Created the World's Greatest Non-Event*, which tells the true story of three California gray whales trapped in early-winter ice off Point Barrow. Greenpeace members, Inupiat fishermen, Alaska Air National Guard, Oil Corporations,

the White House, news organizations from around the globe, and even the Russians played a role in the international rescue effort. These groups all worked together to cut holes with chain saws in the fast-advancing Arctic ice for five miles to move the whales to open water.

Universal picked up the project in turnaround, intending to shoot it entirely in Alaska to take advantage of a fairly aggressive tax credit program there, spurred in part by the success of *The Proposal*, a movie in which I doubled the north shore of Massachusetts for Sitka, Alaska. I found it ironic I was chosen to design the first major studio feature to shoot entirely in Alaska taking advantage of those



Rather than shoot the film above the Arctic Circle, the main street of Barrow, AK, was built further south in a storage yard behind the train depot in Anchorage. The original intent was to hire a primarily Alaskan crew to build a tank and create an Arctic ice field with one end looking out to open sky. What a surprise to find, as the departments were being staffed, that the film was competing with federal government stimulus funds for construction jobs in the state. Ultimately, a blend of locals and out-of-state film crew would contribute to the creation of the many period sets. In addition to Coates, most of the design team came from Los Angeles: Art Director Scott Meehan, Set Designers William Mathews and Chris Biddle, set decorator Jim Ferrell, and construction coordinator Jeff Schlatter. Other team members throwing their hat into the Arctic included prop master Hope Parish, Charge Scenic Artist Kay Kropp, plasterer Alex Scuddi, and physical effects coordinator John Cazin.

Right, and opposite page, top: Two views of a SketchUp model by Art Director Scott Meehan of the main street of Barrow. Rooms in the Top of the World Hotel had a view out across the ice field. The complete street set was constructed on land belonging to the Port of Anchorage adjacent to the Cook Inlet. Below: The set under construction with the hotel at left and the Quonset hut theater at right. Excavation for the tank can be seen in the foreground. Opposite page, center: Set dressing and snow finished the set nicely. Bottom: The theater building, in the palette of Barrow 1988, was a Quonset hut which doubled as a remote video village, craft service and warming hut, along with a digital whale-scanning facility.



tax incentives. Director Ken Kwapis was a strong proponent of taking the project to Alaska. Even with the inherent challenges, the prospect of filming there presented several benefits to the production, including access to Inupiat actors and background artists, local advisors and firsthand participants from the actual events. Even though the Barrow research sidetrip was valuable, this scout was basically to confirm that we could accomplish in Anchorage what was required by the script.

Barrow is an odd collection of ancestral sod homes, early salt box construction made from the lumber of whaling ships in the early 1900s, WWII era Quonset huts from Cold War military installations, a ragtag assortment of early 1970s' pre-fab construction, and slick buildings that look like the latest ski resort. Surrounded on three sides by the Arctic Ocean,

Barrow is a small town where most homes sport the carcasses of old snow machines and other equipment kept for spare parts, but mostly stored there because the cost of shipping them away is too high, and landfills in the permafrost are problematic.

Back in Los Angeles, I began to assemble a team of department heads and to formulate a plan. I also began to immerse myself into 1988 and watched more than seventy hours of news and documentary footage from numerous global sources that covered the actual events. The screen grab function on my laptop went into overdrive. Glasshammer Visual Effects, the same New Zealand company that created whales for *Whale Rider*, was retained to begin research and lay the groundwork to create three animatronic whales.

Photographs by Nelson Coates





The whales' appearance and movements had to match some of the same documentary and news footage I was watching, as that footage would be interspersed throughout the film. A key piece of construction I would need to create was a multi-function main tank to provide an underwater working environment for the robot vehicle and crane arm that would support and move the whales. And then, of course, there was the challenge of getting all the whale elements completed and shipped to Alaska prior to the start of principal photography.

As a result of the Barrow research, and extensive scouting in Anchorage after I returned there in early July, it became apparent that mimicking Barrow on existing Anchorage streets would not be possible. Barrow is flat, snow-covered and treeless, and Anchorage has dramatic mountain vistas and trees in every direction, along with much more current development. After scouring every corner of the city for possible buildings and areas to replicate Barrow, the producers, Ken and I, decided to build the streets of Barrow.

During our initial survey, we had seen a state-owned shooting range south of Anchorage that had an amazing open-sky view looking toward the Cook Inlet. We pursued that site as our primary ice field location with the idea of building a large deck out over a portion of the tidal area to limit the depth of excavation for the tank we would have to construct for the animatronic whales, plus get a clear vista of 120° of sky with no mountains in sight.

Throughout prep the producers and I would Skype with Justin Buckingham and the team at Glasshammer, honing the designs for the three whales and the rigs that would bring them to life. Generators and operating systems would be needed in close proximity to the main tank, so buildings were laid out to mask those elements where possible, and a route was identified for





Left: A view of the small ice field tanks and carved-foam covers under construction, showing the DuraDeck ground cover. The covers helped disguise the peninsulas on the horizon as well as contain special effects fog and smoke. Below: A view of the finished ice field set, looking out to the Cook Inlet, with the main tank configured to match the small ones, as one of the 8' x 30' breathing-hole openings.

integrated into the floor of the tank. The size of the whales and how much of each needed to appear above water was dictated by the documentary footage. Those specifications in turn determined the depth of the constructed tank.

In order to amortize the costs related to creating the ice field, I proposed constructing the set for the town of Barrow adjacent to the ice field, so that when looking down the main street, snow would go off to the horizon. I realized that the ice field needed to be used as much as possible so I proposed overlaying and integrating lots of movable and interchangeable set pieces, much like one would do for a legitimate theater production. In order to accomplish the numerous street scenes, the buildings would all have multiple uses that could be reconfigured to create the look of different streets. In addition, houses would be built on wagons with two sides designed to be one house, and the other two sides a completely different look. To the side of the town set, other structures could be lifted out onto the ice field to create new environments in the distance. Forced-perspective houses, electricity poles and dressing would give depth and changes of location. In essence, I was proposing to create a giant chess game, the size of two football fields, with elements that could be switched overnight to create new scenes. The concept took a few days to gel through the use of a large 1/4" scale model

as well as SketchUp® models that Scott Meehan drew of all the potential camera angles and set permutations.

As the story progresses, the main hole in the ice begins to freeze over. The Inupiat then uses chain saws to expand the size of the hole. The original hole and the expanded hole were seen quite





Above right: A foam scale model by Nelson Coates of the ice pressure ridge raised by a Russian icebreaker. Below: The finished set piece, designed to be part of a pressure ridge many miles long, installed in the ice field set at the Port of Anchorage.

frequently in the actual footage. Eventually, 8' x 30' holes were cut in the ice for five miles in an effort to get the whales to move to open water. I proposed building the large main tank with removable lids that could support the crew and equipment right at the edge, and yet allow for the whales and underwater equipment to have room to operate and reposition. A two hundred-foot crane would lift and exchange the tank lids when a change in looks was required. Ultimately, there were four main-tank lids: the original hole, the chain saw cut hole, an 8' x 30' chain saw cut hole representing one of the five miles of holes, and a solid lid. Further out on the ice field set, there were three other shallower 8' x 30' tanks

that had solid lids used as needed to play as a solid part of the ice field and partial lids so real ice could be inserted for chain sawing sequences. Action would include using seal poles to push the cut blocks of ice under the ice shelf as was done in the Arctic. A dog leg was built into each of the small tanks to allow the cut slabs of ice to disappear from view.

After numerous meetings and conference calls with various Alaska state agencies, we found ourselves in the middle of a battle between state officials and the EPA regarding many aspects of that particular site, and the price for addressing the EPA requirements made the site cost-prohibitive. A backup site was selected, with barely enough time to modify the building designs and site plan to fit the new topography and still complete construction. The new site was a piece of property owned by the Alaska Railroad, adjacent to the Port of Anchorage and behind the main train depot. It would have to be graded so that water would shed during the frequent fall rainstorms. Water collecting on the set would blow the illusion of the frozen Arctic. A material called DuraDeck—basically sections of white high-density polyethylene that interlock—was ordered to serve as the underlayment of the ice, allowing the flat portion of the set to drain, use less snow materials on top, and keep the underlying dirt from soiling the snow. Unfortunately, that material is not off the shelf, but made to order, so timing was everything to get it shipped into Anchorage.





Left: Forced perspective and scale buildings were used to create this set for a street on the outskirts of Barrow, designed to create the illusion that Malik's house is on the edge of the Arctic. Below: Malik's house was built on a wagon and rolled into place, painted in the style of older Inupiaq homes in 1988.

Anchorage is the site of the biggest earthquake on record in North America, and I wanted to be assured that the 38' x 38' x 18' deep main tank, along with all of the other structures, could withstand a good jolt. Most of the tank's three-foot cast-concrete cubes with keyed tops to interlock with each layer were rented from the railroad, and the balance needed were cast by a local manufacturer. Landscape fabric was installed between concrete layers and then pulled back into the fill area so that compacted earth could provide tension and hold the tank in place. Waterproof lining material was installed on all the walls, captured on the top edge with a poured concrete cap to tie the block walls together and to provide a keyed shelf on which to place each version of the ice holes. A slurry floor was poured so our robot vehicle would have a gritty surface on which to maneuver and to hold the liner in place at the foot. And a concrete curb was then poured to keep the robot vehicle from getting close enough to the wall to tear the liner.

Each ice hole cap was constructed in custom configurations of steel, wood and DuraDeck, with the actual exposed edges created from sculpted and cast translucent fiberglass back-painted to create the visual depth seen in historical footage. The caps or lids, about ten thousand pounds each, were staged off to the side of the main set and then traded out as needed using the crane.



Two blocks of the Barrow street set also started to take shape. A period Quonset hut was used as a grocery store and a much larger engineered Quonset hut kit was shipped into Anchorage. At least one engineered structure was needed that could provide weather cover and serve as a warming hut during shooting. The large Quonset frame filled that need and was a great foundation structure to anchor one end of the street as the Barrow theater seen in period reference images. This structure would also provide a shelter out of the wind to shoot digital plates of the whales for the visual effects unit to use in underwater sequences.

With this new ice field set taking shape, we needed to create an ice cove, a groundrow to visually block two peninsulas in the Cook Inlet and cut down the

Right: Amigo's Mexican Restaurant in Barrow serves in the story as an international media hangout. The interior was an extensive modification of a local Mexican restaurant in Anchorage. The exterior was constructed in the ice field on the Barrow main street. Bottom: A Photoshop & Illustrator concept sketch by Nelson Coates of Sam & Lee's Chinese Restaurant. The set for Barrow's historic Chinese restaurant and meeting place was a heavily reworked Quonset hut restaurant location in Anchorage with plate composite elements. Opposite page, top: Barrow Cable Television's North Slope News set incorporated regional Inupiaq patterns into the period cable access set, built inside the University of Anchorage television studio. Center: The set for the Barrow Airport Terminal was designed to be a jarring entry for the international media into the ice frontier above the Arctic Circle. It was built inside a Quonset hut at Anchorage's Merrill Field. Bottom: One of many overnight changeovers of the ice field main tank lid. Five-ton lids designed to look like each particular ice hole configuration were stored off to the side of the set and craned into place for each new scene.



number of effects shots. While that was being sculpted, snow materials testing was happening back at the mill in a raised pool constructed just for that purpose. Snow was not predicted until mid-November so we needed to have plenty of warm-weather options that would sell the Arctic. We discovered a great source for sea salt at the port and found that chipping the salt turned it from brown to white. That would be distance snow. For close work, chipped ice would do the trick, and in the mid-ground, blending the two, would be shredded paper. Hair gels, paraffin applied to the surface of water, cast resin on hanging wires for icicles, carved foam, and cast fiberglass all came together to create the layers of ice and snow needed.

Barrow is also home to the northernmost Mexican restaurant in the world. Pepe's, known in the movie as Amigos, served as a major meeting spot for journalists covering the events of 1988.

It would become a major feature of the set, sitting alongside the Top of the World Hotel, both replete with their paint schemes and old pre-fab building style. Their interiors, along with many others, were being constructed in an old lumber company a few miles away from the port. The producers wanted to have cover sets near the ice field/Barrow street to help not only during inclement weather, but also as the number of daylight hours dropped dramatically later in the schedule.

The whales arrived. The crane arm and the rover were lifted into the tank, and the whale heads installed. Then testing began. Our metric to imperial calculations thankfully had been correct, and the tanks began to fill. Being there to introduce the whales to the director and to watch his face as they went through their paces was one of the best moments ever.



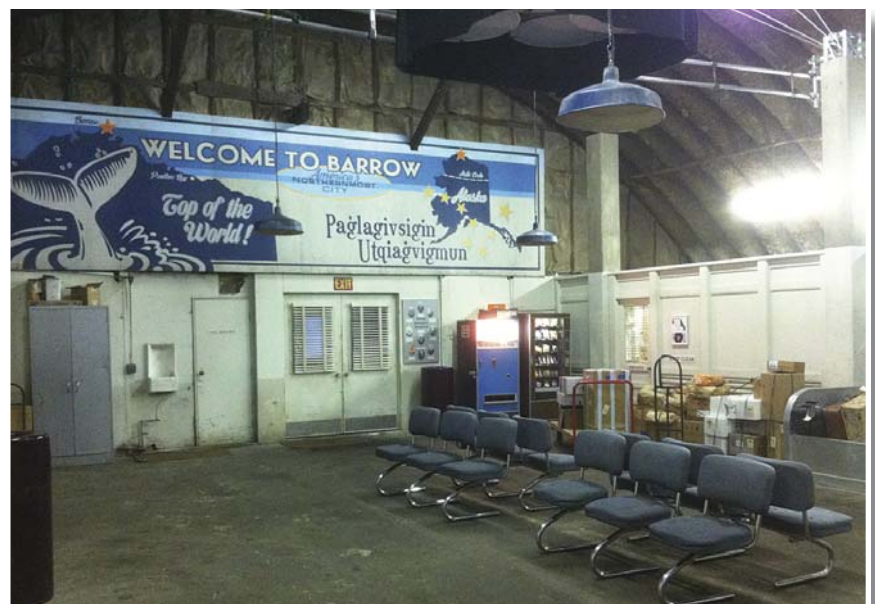
By the time shooting began, every crew member had played with the 1/4" scale model in the design office. Each also had their own copy of the maps of our giant chess board so they would know what the set would look like in every scene. Additionally, since only one end of the ice field was open to the sky, Ken, cinematographer John Bailey, assistant director Steve Dunn, and I worked out how to shoot every scene, flipping all the reverse angles—in essence doing every scene on the ice as a series of French reverses. We started calling this “flipping the pancake.” Where needed, there were two large “white billboards” on flatbeds positioned behind the coves to kill blue sky when grey skies were needed. They cut down immensely on the use of green screen.

The ice field was good for one additional incarnation: the aftermath created by a Russian icebreaker cutting through a pressure ridge of ice. The draft of the Russian ship (shot later as a miniature) was calculated and enormous plaster and resin ice blocks were sculpted to provide areas and levels for the actors to interact with green-screened water, whales and the ship.

I have to tip my hat to the construction, paint, and dressing crews that endured many sub-freezing nights to change over the ice field and town buildings for the next day's work, and to the tireless efforts of all of the crews to create authenticity and believability in every scene. Whether casting fake skins to fabricate a whaling boat or carving a pressure ridge, every crew member felt the need to get it right and honor the heritage of the native Inupiat, and each of the groups represented throughout the film.

I often tell my crews that working on a period movie is akin to traveling to a different country. Things seem familiar and yet are quite different on many levels. Details like old CRT computers with Rolodexes and card files right beside them, or simplistic period news sets and graphics (sometimes cheesy-looking by today's standards) all work together to provide a strong sense of time and place. And yet, in the Arctic there is a sense of timelessness. We made a conscious choice to tell our tale in a way that does service to the period while making it visually accessible to today's audiences.

I still remember the Barrow locals working as extras in the town set that exclaimed, “I used to play right there!” Of course, it was really seven hundred and twenty miles and twenty-two years away. **ADG**



March 15th, 2013

Dear Labor and Commerce Committee Members,

It has come to my attention that HB 112, introduced by House Representative Stoltze, threatens to eliminate Alaska's Film Tax Credit Incentive Program, thereby killing this emerging industry before it ever gets a chance to fully develop. I know first hand, the film industry has had a positive economic impact on both my business and my community. In fact, a 2012 Legislative Audit of the program showed a \$2 increase in economic output for every \$1 of tax credit issued by the State.

I also understand that tax credits are awarded only after the conclusion of filming, after dollars have circulated through the economy and all those dollars are verified by an independent, state certified CPA.

If HB 112 should pass I believe:

- **It would kill the film industry** resulting in a significant loss of revenue to my livelihood, and eliminating jobs for Alaskans, and an opportunity for future Workforce Development
- The film program is vital to my employment, and eliminating it before allowing it to go into effect is a major setback
- Millions have already been invested in a sound stage, trucks and equipment...**how do we recover from these investments?**
- Hundreds of Alaskans have been trained and others are scheduled to be trained....**how does the future look for our emerging workforce, where Alaskan funds have already been dedicated?**
- Alaskan companies see **tax relief** by purchasing tax credits, allowing for new investments and **new jobs for the Alaskan workforce.**

The global film industry is extremely competitive. **HB112 has sent a chilling message through the industry.** Productions are searching around the world for a reliable, stable environment, but now see Alaska as unstable and too risky to invest. With the possibility of the new 10-year program being repealed before it even goes into effect, producers will simply not invest time/energy or money into future projects in Alaska. This is a terrible situation.

Economic diversification is good for everyone. This bill will eliminate the Alaska Film Tax Incentive Program, decrease efforts to diversify our economy, eliminate jobs and discourage those hoping to invest in careers and business opportunities that support economic growth in Alaska. It is crucial that HB112 not be allowed to move forward.

Thank you for your time with this important issue...

Sincerely,

Karen Casanovas
Freelance Film & TV Crew Member