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MINNESOTA "SNOWBATE" INCENTIVE FOR FILM PRODUCTION RESTORED BY 2006 MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE

(St. Paul, Minnesota – May 22, 2006) – Restoring funds that have been absent since 2002, the 2006 Minnesota Legislature approved \$1.7 million for the Minnesota Film & TV Board's "Snowbate" production incentive program, designed to support and grow the moving image industry in Minnesota. The Governor is expected to sign the bill.

"Snowbate" is a 15 percent rebate for the cost of production in Minnesota for major studio features, Minnesota features, TV series, commercials, music videos and documentaries. Since its creation in 1981, the Minnesota Film and TV Board has sought to create and support Minnesota jobs in the film industry.

"Since 2002, Minnesota has been just one of four states in the country without some kind of incentive for film and television production," said Lucinda Winter, executive director of the Minnesota Film & TV Board (MFTVB). "This lack of incentives made it impossible for us to compete with countries like Canada and states like New Mexico."

"This funding puts us back in the film and television game, providing rebates for about \$12 million worth of production costs spent in Minnesota between June 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007," Winter added.

Funding for Snowbate was discontinued in the 2002 legislative session along with much of the Minnesota Film & TV Board operations funding. As a result, Winter said there has been very little film production here, with a few exceptions including "North Country" and "A Prairie Home Companion." "A Prairie Home Companion" had Minnesota investors, and "North Country" received a one-time incentive from Iron Range Resources.

"The economic impact of this funding is immediate and significant," said Victoria Wozniak, President of the MFTVB Board. "Specifically, the IRR incentive was less than \$200,000, yet "North Country"'s economic impact on the Iron Range totaled more than \$3 million in the months it shot here."

Winter credited production crew members who organized a trade association called "Shoot in Minnesota" to lobby the Legislature for the return of production industry incentives. Winter said their testimony at hearings, letters and phone calls resulted in bi-partisan support for the legislation, including support from chief author Sen. Dick Cohen (DFL-St. Paul), chair of the Senate Finance Committee; Rep. Mike Charron (R-Woodbury); Rep. Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm); Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul); and Sen. Dave Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm); and Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont), and others.

"The MFTVB will work hard to communicate the positive impact that television, film, corporate and commercial production has on our state and local economies. Our goal is to be able to compete nationally and internationally with the right combination of incentives and production services so we can bring more production dollars to Minnesota and retain the state's outstanding creative workforce."

The Minnesota Film & TV Board's mission is to promote the art and commerce of the moving image industry in Minnesota. For more information, visit the MFTVB website at www.mnfilmandtv.org or call the Film Board office in St. Paul at 651-645-3600.