

Thursday 9 July 2009

Initiative makes Leicestershire a 'Film Friendly' county

Leicestershire today becomes the first county in the East Midlands to declare itself 'film friendly'. Leicester Shire Promotions joins EM Media to pledge support for the East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative, which aims to make the East Midlands the number one destination for film and TV productions.

The **East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative** is the result of work by regional screen agency EM Media, which aims to increase inward investment into the East Midlands through active promotion of the region's diverse locations, skilled crew and facilities. The Initiative aims to bring together local authorities and tourism bodies from across the region to work with EM Media to encourage a positive filmmaking experience across the East Midlands.

The **Film Friendly Initiative** will ensure filming in the East Midlands is easy, efficient and effective. EM Media will continue its work to increase levels of filming in the region and partners in the Initiative will work to encourage return business from production companies, by guaranteeing producers a positive filming experience in the East Midlands.

The **East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative** agreement will be signed today by EM Media Chief Executive Debbie Williams and Leicester Shire Promotions Chief Executive Martin Peters at popular Leicestershire film location Great Central Railway.

Great Central Railway has been seen in a large number of high profile productions. These include feature films *The Hours* starring Nicole Kidman, *Enigma* starring Kate Winslet and EM Media co-financed *Bronson* starring Tom Hardy; and television productions including Channel 4's *E=MC2* and the BBC's *Hawking*.

In June 2009 Great Central Railway featured in *Cemetery Junction*, the eagerly anticipated directorial debut from comics Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant. *Cemetery Junction*, featuring a stellar cast including Ralph Fiennes and Emily Watson, is based at Shepperton Studios and filmed for a week on location in Leicestershire at the Railway and also at the Bell Foundry in Loughborough. The film's Leicestershire shoot was the result of work by EM Media to promote the region's locations, and EM Media continued to provide the production with invaluable support throughout.

EM Media Chief Executive Debbie Williams comments:

“EM Media has demonstrated that production activity in the East Midlands during 2007/08 resulted in £35m inward investment into the region’s economy and enhanced the region’s reputation as one of the UK’s most exciting places to film. We welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with local authority and tourism colleagues across the East Midlands to build upon this success. Filming brings many benefits; it increases inward investment to the region, creates jobs and in the longer term leads to increased tourism. We’re delighted that Leicester Shire Promotions has recognised those benefits and embraced the Film Friendly Initiative, and we look forward to rolling it out across the East Midlands.”

Leicester Shire Promotions Chief Executive Martin Peters comments:

”Leicester and Leicestershire have a proud heritage of welcoming film makers to striking locations such as Belvoir Castle and Great Central Railway. Filming in a recognisable location can have a significant impact on raising the profile of a destination and attracting ‘film tourists’ to boost the local visitor economy. For example, after the filming of the movie, *Young Victoria* at Belvoir Castle, a temporary exhibition dedicated to the film attracted over 1,100 new visitors at a time when the Castle is usually closed to the public. We look forward to attracting further TV and film production companies to Leicester and Leicestershire, and as such, we are supporting EM Media’s Film Friendly initiative.”

For further information please contact Emily Lappin, Head of Communications, EM Media or Emma Hewitt, Communications Coordinator, EM Media on 0115 934 9090 or via email at firstname.lastname@em-media.org.uk.

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Notes to editors

About The East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative

The East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative aims to bring together partners from Local Authorities covering all counties of the East Midlands (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland), relevant City Centre Management organisations and Destination Management Organisations to work together to make the East Midlands *the* film friendly region of choice for national and international productions.

The East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative will guarantee producers a hassle free shoot in the East Midlands by facilitating the filmmaking process, and will work to increase levels of filming to the region, develop positive relationships and ensure return business; supporting EM Media’s ambition to make the East Midlands the number one destination for films and substantial TV productions.

The East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative has compiled a Guide to Filming and Code of Practice which will be issued to all Film Friendly Partners and visiting productions.

In 2008/09 film and television productions generated £35 million inward investment for the East Midlands’ economy. Through partnership working The East Midlands Film Friendly Initiative will endeavor to

encourage more productions into the region by providing essential, on the ground support to visiting productions.

About EM Media

- EM Media is the Regional Screen Agency for England's East Midlands.
- Working in harmony with a range of partners locally, nationally and internationally, EM Media secures finance, nurtures talent, invests in success and stimulates growth and innovation in the Film, Games, TV and Interactive sectors; ensuring East Midlands' digital industries lead and compete globally.
- EM Media has financed over 70 distinctive and innovative digital media projects, including the development and production of 31 feature films, leading the creation of a national profile for the East Midlands as a film-led region.
- Financed productions include:
 - Justin Molotnikov's *Crying With Laughter*
 - Karl Golden's *Pelican Blood*
 - Samantha Morton's directorial debut *The Unloved*
 - Brian Percival's *A Boy Called Dad*
 - Alexis Dos Santos's *Unmade Beds*
 - Nicolas Winding Refn's *Bronson*
 - Kenny Glenaan's *Summer*
 - Duane Hopkins' *Better Things*
 - Martin Radich's *Crack Willow*
 - Steven Sheil's *Mum and Dad*
 - Jeanie Finlay's *Goth Cruise*
- Award-winning film investments include the BAFTA and BIFA winning *Control* (Anton Corbijn) and the BAFTA award-winning *This Is England* (Shane Meadows) (*Best British Film 2007*).
- EM Media has also co-financed the first slate of films from Warp X, the low-budget digital film initiative which has produced:
 - *A Complete History of My Sexual Failures*
 - *Donkey Punch*
 - *Hush*
 - *Bunny & The Bull*
 - *She, A Chinese*
 - *All Tomorrow's Parties*
- EM Media has co-financed the development and production of games and virtual worlds with European Regional Development finance, including *Space Ark*, *mixm8*, *Beauty Salon*, *Geon: Emotions*, *Bugs of War*, *Manifest*, *Spell Souls* and *Hunter's World*.

Visit www.em-media.org.uk.

About Leicester Shire Promotions

Leicester Shire Promotions is a private, not-for-profit company formed in July 2003 as a partnership between Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. The company is the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) responsible for promoting Leicester and Leicestershire to visitors, based on a coordinated place marketing strategy that focuses on destination leadership and coordination, attracting visitors, services for visitors, and services for the tourism industry. For more information, please visit www.goleicestershire.com

