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County approves \$1.75 million grant for Ringling College

Sarasota County's venture into the film industry advanced Wednesday, Dec. 8, as county commissioners approved a grant of \$1.75 million to Ringling College of Art and Design to develop a post-production facility on the campus.

Funding will come from the county's Economic Development Incentive Fund and the college will use the money to:

- purchase post-production equipment
- remodel space at the college
- purchase equipment for location-based filming.

According to Ringling President Larry Thompson, the college will build on its reputation as a world leader in digital filmmaking to develop its post-production capabilities. Ringling also has in place the technological infrastructure – the computing capability – necessary for such a venture because all post-production work is done digitally. Thompson added that over the past year, the college has brought in several top filmmakers, such as Paul Schiff, to work with students and the filmmakers have expressed excitement at the prospect of continuing this relationship.

Data from the Sarasota County Film and Entertainment Office indicates that the county has received an economic impact of \$16.4 million from projects over the past four years. Across Florida, the film industry has generated over 26,000 jobs with an economic output exceeding \$3 billion, according to a 2009 state study.

Commissioners also approved two additional requests for economic development incentive grants for:

- Project 10-11-2, a company involved in the development and manufacturing of downstream specialty pharmaceutical intermediates, will get \$105,000 in assistance. The company would create 18 new jobs over the next three years with an average wage of \$50,000.
- Project 10-11-6, a distributor and manufacturer of cleaning products and equipment, will receive \$50,000 in assistance. That company would create 35 new jobs over the next five years with an average wage of almost \$41,000.

The incentive grants are conditional upon the companies relocating to Sarasota County.

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