



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

February 26, 2021

In response to inquiries raised at the public hearing:

My name is Karen Carberry Warhola and I am the Director of the Maine Film Office within the Office of Tourism at the Department of Economic and Community Development. The Maine Film Office markets Maine as a filming location and executes a strategy to increase production in Maine to help grow Maine's economy. It is the official liaison between the film industry, state agencies, and production companies.

The Film Office markets Maine as a filming location for all forms of production including feature films, television, digital media, photography and catalog shoots; supports productions by assisting with finding support services and resources within Maine; offers incentives; works with communities to prepare them for productions of all types and sizes; and maintains the website, FilmInMaine.com, as a comprehensive resource including an online production guide and a location library.

In 2020, the Coronavirus outbreak upended the global film industry. When the industry shuttered and film and photography shut down in Maine in March, the Film Office continued to promote Maine as a filming location to businesses, television networks, production companies and executives in diverse areas of the screen sector and worked with the local film community and production companies from across the country as they prepared safety plans to start filming again as soon as the time was right.

The Film Office also assisted with the Department of Economic and Community Development's work to provide Maine businesses with economic recovery support, and worked with the Business Answers program throughout 2020 to help respond to questions about the state's support efforts; including COVID-19 prevention guidance checklists, grants, reopening resources and other financial assistance programs.

With trade shows, conferences, film festivals and in-person industry meetings curtailed across the country, the Film Office shifted its marketing online and created a virtual marketing campaign including:

- In-person events and meetings were replaced with virtual outreach, and appointments and contacts made by Zoom, email, phone and social media led to increased productions filmed in Maine.
- A "Coronavirus Update" page on the Film Office website was created to provide the global production community with critical guidance for safely filming in Maine.
- A "Local News" page on the Film Office website was created to update the media production sector with the latest industry news and safety protocols for filming during the pandemic.
- Outreach efforts to visual media productions include contact with productions in: United Kingdom, London, Toronto, Quebec, and the states of AR, CA, CO, DC, FL, HI, MA, ME, MT, NC, NY, NJ, PA, RI, TN, VA.

- The Film Office Director continued serving a final term as an elected officer on the board of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) – an extraordinary opportunity to connect with filmmakers, producers and industry VIPs from around the world.

When Maine re-opened for film and photography on June 1, the Film Office reached out to the industry to promote Maine as a great place to film in this “new normal” and worked with productions to hire local; source goods and services locally; and ensure they followed Maine’s COVID-19 Prevention Checklist Industry Guidance and had COVID-19 safety protocols in place on their productions.

Given Maine’s appealingly lower COVID-19 infection numbers, productions started filming again in Maine as soon as film and photography re-opened in June. Despite a pandemic production shutdown from March to June, the number of productions that filmed in Maine during 2020 increased over last year as productions prioritized finding safe places to film.

Throughout 2020, the Film Office connected with and provided production support for 140 productions; and worked with the local film community, Maine businesses, communities, residents, organizations, educational facilities and students.

Though productions are not required to register with the state, thirty-one productions registered with the Film Office, representing a portion of productions that filmed in Maine in 2020.

Seven productions received a Maine Media Production Certificate through the Maine Attraction Film Incentive Plan and their anticipated amount of in-state spending is \$5,493,452.00 (up from six productions and \$3,381,717.00 in 2019).

Below is a sample of productions filmed in Maine in 2020.

“MAINE CABIN MASTERS”

DIY Network TV Series, Season 5 & 7

“THE LOST KITCHEN” WITH MAINE’S ERIN FRENCH

Chip and Joanna Gaines’s new Magnolia Network, TV Series, Season 1

“CHOPPED”

Food Network, TV Series, 10 episodes (featuring Ted Allen, Martha Stewart and others)

GORDON RAMSAY’S “UNCHARTED”

National Geographic Channel, TV Series Episode

POLAND SPRINGS “ORIGINS”

Commercial (featuring Maine native Patrick Dempsey)

HARVARD PILGRAM HEALTHCARE “RESILIENCE”

Commercial (featuring Maine native Joan Benoit Samuelson)

With the shift to remote work and online meetings, businesses and organizations (Work-in-Maine, etc.) turned to film, video, photography and digital media content to promote their goals and deliver their messages. The film industry supplies value-added benefits and is inextricably linked to Maine art, business, tourism, and other industries. The value-added resources offered by the industry help get the Maine message out there and can be a valuable resource for the State’s recovery efforts and Economic Development Strategy.

Thank you for your questions about the Film, Television and Video industry in Maine.