



FILM INDUSTRY DEEP DIVE REPORT



July 30th 2026



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Antelope Valley has long been a place where creativity, innovation, and opportunity come together. Our distinctive landscapes, diverse communities, proximity to the greater Los Angeles region, and longstanding connection to the film and television industry give us a unique foundation on which to build. As we continue AV EDGE's Industry Deep Dive Roundtable series, the Film Industry Deep Dive provides an important opportunity to examine how we can strengthen that foundation and ensure more of the economic benefits of production remain here in our region.

What became clear through this discussion is that our opportunity extends well beyond filming locations. A thriving regional film economy creates opportunities for our hotels, restaurants, retailers, transportation providers, skilled trades, local vendors, students, and workforce. Strengthening this industry therefore means looking at the entire ecosystem, from efficient permitting and competitive incentives to workforce pathways, local business participation, and the infrastructure and services productions need to succeed.

This report reflects AV EDGE's broader commitment to bringing public and private partners together around opportunities that strengthen the Antelope Valley as a whole. By working across jurisdictions and sectors, connecting productions with regional resources, and continuing to advocate for policies that support filming and investment, we can position the Antelope Valley to compete effectively while creating meaningful benefits for our communities.

I am grateful to the industry professionals, local governments, educators, workforce partners, businesses, and community leaders who contributed their experience and perspective to this Deep Dive. Their participation demonstrates what is possible when we approach regional economic development with a shared purpose.



AV EDGE
President
Suzy
Ghazarossian



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Antelope Valley has long played an important role in Southern California's film and television industry, offering distinctive locations, expansive landscapes, experienced local partners, and convenient access to the greater Los Angeles production ecosystem. The AV EDGE Film Industry Roundtable brought together industry professionals, public agencies, educators, workforce partners, and community leaders to explore how we can build on those strengths and capture more of the economic activity generated by production.

The discussion highlighted both opportunities and practical next steps—from maintaining efficient permitting and strengthening competitive incentives to developing local workforce pathways, supporting production-related businesses, and better connecting productions with regional vendors and services.

This report reflects the collaborative spirit of that conversation and provides a framework for continued action. By coordinating across jurisdictions and industries, we can make the Antelope Valley an even more attractive, responsive, and competitive destination for film, television, commercial, music-video, and streaming production.

We appreciate the expertise and participation of everyone who contributed to this effort and look forward to advancing the opportunities identified through the Film Industry Roundtable.



AV EDGE
Executive Director
Drew Mercy

Film Industry Roundtable Report

July 30, 2026

Draft for review. This report summarizes discussion themes and is not intended as a verbatim transcript. Reported figures, participant names, and program details should be confirmed before final publication.

Key Outcomes

Central Finding: The Antelope Valley can capture more film, television, commercial, music-video, and streaming production by combining rapid permitting, distinctive locations, hotel capacity, out-of-zone incentives, local workforce connections, and a coordinated film-friendly business network.

AV EDGE convened film-industry representatives, local governments, labor, education and workforce partners, film liaisons, and economic-development stakeholders to identify practical strategies for increasing production activity and retaining more of its economic benefit in the Antelope Valley.

Participants described a region with distinctive locations, rapid permit processing, hotel capacity, experienced local contacts, and eligibility for out-of-zone state tax-credit uplifts. The strongest near-term opportunity is a coordinated package of stackable incentives, predictable production support, workforce pathways, local crew and vendor resources, and a film-friendly merchant network - rather than major new soundstage construction.

Decisions Made

- Do not prioritize new soundstage construction at this time. Participants reported statewide stage utilization of approximately 62 percent, with additional facilities coming online and some new stages struggling to fill.
- Preserve Lancaster and Palmdale's reported three-day permit turnaround as a core competitive advantage.
- Do not recommend a blanket waiver of local permit fees, reported at approximately \$150-\$177. Target relief to smaller or low-impact productions and to costs that materially influence location decisions.
- Evaluate a low-impact or sliding-scale permit option based on production footprint, including crew size, filming days, locations, parking, public-safety needs, road closures, and special effects.
- Develop stackable incentives that reward hotel stays, verified local spending, local hiring, and use of local vendors while reducing selected production-service costs where appropriate.
- Advance workforce pathways, a local crew and trainee roster, a merchant discount or crew-card initiative, and continued policy advocacy affecting movie ranches and regional filming.

Critical Gaps

Regional Filming Activity & Competitive Position

- Recent activity discussed included a Sabrina Carpenter music video, Tracker, and Disney/Hulu's Paradise, which reportedly used the Painted Turtle camp for six filming days following approximately three weeks of preparation.
- Local representatives reported eight projects in Lancaster and four in Palmdale during the preceding month, with some productions using local incentives.
- Lancaster and Palmdale were reported to process permits in approximately three business days, compared with a regional range of five business days to two weeks.

- Palmdale's incentive was reported to have generated more than 600 hotel room nights since January and to have been used seven times.
- Empty big-box retail spaces were identified as increasingly useful for flexible interiors, temporary production environments, storage, offices, and base-camp functions.

Regional Assets & Location-Selection Factors

- Desert, mountain, ranch, roadway, aviation, industrial, suburban, and open-landscape locations that can represent multiple settings.
- Proximity to the Los Angeles production ecosystem while remaining outside the traditional 30-mile zone for qualifying state incentive purposes.
- Hotel inventory and an existing Palmdale incentive that can help reduce lodging costs and generate measurable room nights.
- Vacant and underused big-box spaces, including former retail locations, that can serve as flexible interiors, temporary production environments, offices, storage, set-building areas, or base camps.
- Experienced film liaisons, movie ranches, location professionals, labor contacts, schools, and local businesses familiar with production needs.
- Productions evaluate total cost, schedule, certainty, and the responsiveness of local contacts - not permit fees alone.
- Location managers and scouts need clear information on permits, public-safety requirements, road access, parking, nearby hotels, available buildings, and local vendors.
- Crew availability, equipment access, insurance, transportation, catering, storage, and the ability to solve problems quickly can determine whether a location remains competitive.
- A visible incentive program can attract initial interest, but a predictable production-friendly process is necessary to convert that interest into filming days and local spending.

Tracking Local Economic Impact

Permit counts alone do not capture the full local impact of filming. Participants emphasized the need to document preparation days, hotel room nights, local hires, equipment rentals, catering, hardware and home-improvement purchases, fuel, transportation, security, storage, and direct spending by crew members.

- Work with hotels to report aggregate production-related room nights while protecting client confidentiality.
- Develop a practical method for productions and vendors to identify verified local purchases and services.
- Track permit volume, filming days, preparation days, local hires, hotel use, incentive participation, and business redemptions so programs can be evaluated.
- Use the information to demonstrate return on local incentives and improve regional marketing.

Barriers, Permitting & Production Needs

Small and Independent Productions

- Small productions, music videos, and micro-budget projects may avoid permitting when the overall process appears expensive or complicated, even when the jurisdictional permit fee is modest.
- Insurance cost can be a larger barrier than permit fees for micro-budget shoots. Any small-production strategy should include clear insurance guidance in addition to fee relief.

- A low-impact or sliding-scale process should use objective criteria and remain easy to understand and administer.
- Online location platforms can misrepresent whether properties are properly permitted, creating compliance and liability concerns for owners and productions.

Predictable Production-Service Costs

- Provide clear advance guidance for law enforcement, fire review, road closures, parking, traffic control, special effects, simulated emergency activity, and other higher-impact production needs.
- Maintain community notification - rather than unanimous resident consent - as the standard for residential filming areas, consistent with current Lancaster and Palmdale practice.
- Consider targeted reimbursement of selected public-safety or production-service costs when assistance is likely to influence location choice and generate measurable local benefit.

Regional Competitiveness & Incentives

Participants reported strong momentum from California Film and Television Tax Credit Program 4.0, including expansion from \$330 million to \$750 million, higher effective credit levels, and additional uplifts for qualifying production outside the Los Angeles 30-mile zone. The Antelope Valley's out-of-zone position and active local liaisons can help productions capture these benefits. Program figures below are reported from the roundtable and should be verified before publication.

- Reported Year 1 results included 170 accepted projects, \$6.6 billion in projected production spending, \$4.3 billion in qualified expenditures, \$2.58 billion in qualified wages, approximately 34,900 cast and crew jobs, 6,630 filming days, and an 82 percent increase in applications.
- Program 4.0 was reported to use six application windows in the next fiscal year.
- Palmdale's hotel-reimbursement or permit-fee-offset incentive was reported to have generated more than 600 hotel room nights since January and seven official uses.
- Participants emphasized that the existence of an incentive program itself can generate interest, particularly among mid- and lower-budget productions.

Stackable Local Incentive Framework

- Research a Sacramento-style hotel and local-spending incentive, including the reported program cap of up to \$250,000, and evaluate funding, eligibility, reimbursement levels, and documentation.
- Review Oakland and Shasta County incentive approaches, FilmLA's low-impact permit pilot, and Palmdale's existing program as benchmarks.
- Allow local support to stack with state incentives where permitted, focusing on room nights, verified purchases, local hires, local vendors, and multiple filming days.
- Use clear caps, minimum requirements, audit standards, and measurable outcomes so assistance changes behavior rather than simply subsidizing projects already committed to the region.
- Consider incentives directed to crew spending, including hotel and merchant discounts, not only direct production reimbursements.

Recommended Local Direction

- Build a simple, publicly available menu of incentives and services so productions can understand support before selecting a location.

- Use different eligibility tiers for micro-budget, independent, commercial, television, and larger productions while preserving objective criteria.
- Allow hotel stays and verified local purchases to count toward reimbursement, with additional value for local hires, trainee participation, and multiple filming days.
- Pair incentives with prompt local liaison support so productions can document eligibility and access state out-of-zone uplifts.

Soundstage, Infrastructure & Support-Business Investment

- Do not encourage speculative new soundstage development at this time based on the reported statewide capacity and additional facilities coming online.
- Promote the adaptive use of empty stores and other large buildings for interiors, temporary stages, production offices, set construction, storage, and base camps.
- Map existing support businesses and remaining gaps involving equipment, grip, barricades, generators, transportation, storage, catering, security, and specialized services.
- Identify appropriate locations for equipment rental yards or other production-support operations where a demonstrated market need exists.
- Maintain current information on road-closure processes, special-effects requirements, public-safety contacts, utilities, parking, and other infrastructure needed by productions.

Workforce Development Challenges

Existing Programs & Opportunities

- The California Film Commission Career Pathways program was described as receiving 0.25 percent of participating tax-credit project budgets and supporting six training providers that prepare set-ready workers.
- Career Readiness activities can include industry panels, donations, and partnerships with career-based learning organizations; community-college Career Technical Education programs may be eligible partners.
- Quartz Hill High School has a Film Academy. Active-set field trips, industry panels, mentorships, internships, and exposure to below-the-line occupations were recommended.
- Adult Education is developing a reported 14,000-square-foot trades facility that may include drones, set design, arts studio space, and construction-trade crossover opportunities.
- Production accounting and incentive knowledge were identified as especially durable career skills. Participants also emphasized that IATSE pathway programs teach specialized crafts and should be part of the regional strategy.
- Develop a verified regional roster of students, trainees, and experienced local workers so productions can identify available talent and local residents can access opportunities.
- Invite film-industry representatives to the AV EDGE Artificial Intelligence Task Force and organize a regional career event for students.

Regional Talent Roster & Pathway Design

- Use a listing-service model that distinguishes experienced professionals, union or pathway participants, students, and entry-level trainees.

- Establish verification, privacy, eligibility, update, and disclaimer standards before publishing names or contact information.
- Include production accounting, location support, set construction, drones, transportation, office support, and other below-the-line occupations - not only on-camera roles.
- Coordinate with labor organizations so local training complements, rather than duplicates, established craft and pathway requirements.

Regional Coordination Needs

Policy & Permitting Priorities

- Coordinate opposition or amendments to the proposed Los Angeles County Special Ecological Area designation where it threatens movie-ranch operations and filming locations; connect film stakeholders with the broader effort involving Scott Wilk and the Building Industry Association.
- Improve federal land-use and Bureau of Land Management permitting for productions using federal property.
- Support continued state competitiveness, including commercial and post-production incentives and consideration of above-the-line costs.
- Continue county and regional permitting coordination so productions receive consistent requirements, timelines, and points of contact.
- Engage federal, state, county, and local representatives on policy changes that preserve filming access and strengthen the regional production economy.

Vendor & Community Engagement

- Partner with local chambers of commerce on a MyCrewCard-style merchant discount network for visiting crews.
- Recruit hotels, restaurants, retailers, hardware suppliers, transportation providers, and other businesses to offer crew discounts and report aggregate redemptions.
- Create and promote a film-friendly vendor list on city, FilmLA, and partner websites and through social media.
- Educate local businesses on production schedules, bulk orders, early and late operating hours, parking needs, purchase orders, invoicing, and the economic value of being responsive.
- Plan a familiarization tour of the Painted Turtle and other locations for film-industry contacts, targeting late September or October, and pursue a California Film Commission location spotlight.

Cross-Sector Coordination

- Create a consistent regional framework for tracking filming days, preparation days, hotel room nights, local spending, local hires, incentive participation, and business activity.
- Maintain a shared list of barriers requiring city, county, state, federal, labor, education, or industry action.
- Coordinate incentives, permitting, workforce development, marketing, vendor engagement, familiarization tours, location spotlights, and outreach to scouts and location managers through an AV EDGE Film Industry Working Group.
- Use verified results from local incentive and permit pilots to guide future recommendations and adjustments.

ACTION ITEMS

AV EDGE

- Complete and circulate the draft report for factual corrections, assignment confirmation, and additional information.
- Research stackable incentive models, including Sacramento, Oakland, Shasta County, FilmLA's low-impact pilot, and Palmdale's current program.
- Convene cities, hotels, FilmLA, chambers, and industry partners to establish a consistent local-impact tracking framework.
- Engage chambers on a MyCrewCard-style merchant network and film-friendly business campaign.
- Coordinate a Painted Turtle and regional location familiarization tour and pursue a California Film Commission location spotlight.
- Arrange an Antelope Valley presentation to Teamsters Local 399 location managers with Josh Thomas, David Halver, Tisha Tell, and an IATSE representative.
- Connect film stakeholders to the Special Ecological Area policy effort and invite appropriate representatives to the AV EDGE Artificial Intelligence Task Force.
- Recommend membership and a work plan for an ongoing AV EDGE Film Industry Working Group.

Committee Assignments

- Workforce Development & Education Committee: Coordinate CFC pathway connections, school and college participation, the student career event, mentorships, internships, and the regional talent roster.
- Legislative Affairs Committee: Develop advocacy priorities involving the SEA designation, federal land permitting, state film incentives, commercial and post-production incentives, and above-the-line eligibility.
- Transportation & Infrastructure Committee: Review road closures, parking, traffic control, public-safety costs, special effects, utilities, and site-access issues affecting productions.
- Business Attraction Task Force: Evaluate production-support business opportunities and adaptive reuse of vacant retail or industrial space.
- Film Industry Working Group: Coordinate incentives, permitting, workforce, marketing, vendor engagement, and follow-up with industry partners.

Open Questions

- Which incentive structure would most effectively change production decisions while producing measurable local benefit?
- What criteria should define a low-impact or sliding-scale permit, and how should insurance requirements be addressed?
- How can hotels, productions, and vendors report economic activity without disclosing confidential client information?
- Who should own and maintain a verified regional crew, trainee, vendor, and location roster?
- Which schools and community-college programs qualify for CFC Career Pathways or Career Readiness participation?

- What parcels and movie-ranch operations are affected by the proposed SEA designation?
- Should AV EDGE establish a permanent Film Industry Committee or begin with a time-limited working group?



FILM INDUSTRY DEEP DIVE REPORT TASK LIST



July 30th 2026

Film Industry Roundtable Task Assignments

AV EDGE Staff

- Finalize and circulate the report for participant review, corrections, and assignment confirmation.
- Prepare a comparison of stackable incentive options, including funding sources, eligibility, caps, documentation, and measurable outcomes.
- Convene Lancaster, Palmdale, hotels, FilmLA, chambers, and industry partners to create a consistent local-impact tracking framework.
- Develop a concept for a verified regional crew, trainee, vendor, and location-resource directory.
- Engage local chambers to create a MyCrewCard-style merchant network and film-friendly business campaign.
- Coordinate a Painted Turtle and regional location familiarization tour for late September or October, subject to availability.
- Request a California Film Commission location spotlight highlighting iconic Antelope Valley locations.
- Arrange an Antelope Valley presentation at a Teamsters Local 399 location managers meeting.
- Connect stakeholders with the SEA designation policy effort and invite film representatives to the AV EDGE Artificial Intelligence Task Force.
- Propose membership, leadership, and a first-year work plan for a Film Industry Working Group.

Cities, FilmLA & Local Film Liaisons

- Confirm recent production counts, permit turnaround, current fees, incentive uses, hotel-room results, and filming-day metrics.
- Preserve rapid permit processing and identify recurring delays or inconsistent requirements.
- Evaluate a low-impact or sliding-scale pilot using objective production-footprint criteria.
- Provide clear advance cost guidance for police or sheriff services, fire review, road closures, parking, traffic control, and special effects.
- Evaluate targeted reimbursement of selected production-service costs where it is likely to influence location choice.
- Maintain community notification practices that protect residents without requiring unanimous consent.
- Create a current inventory of vacant big-box spaces, production offices, base camps, equipment yards, and film-friendly locations.
- Share Palmdale pilot and incentive data with appropriate city leadership to evaluate future adjustments.

Workforce Development & Education Committee

- Work with Yete Osunsanmi and the appropriate California Film Commission contacts to connect local schools and colleges to Career Pathways and Career Readiness opportunities.
- Coordinate participation by AVUHSD, Quartz Hill High School Film Academy, Adult Education, Antelope Valley College, and other appropriate education partners.
- Develop a regional film-career event for students featuring below-the-line occupations, production accounting, incentives, labor pathways, and support-business careers.

- Explore mentorships with location managers and other production professionals, plus internships, job shadowing, active-set field trips, and industry panels.
- Work with Tisha Tell to identify the appropriate IATSE representatives and pathway programs.
- Develop standards for a verified roster of local students, trainees, and experienced production workers.
- Evaluate how the planned Adult Education trades facility and drone, set-design, arts, and construction programs can support production careers.
- Invite Josh Thomas, David Halver, and other appropriate representatives to the AV EDGE Artificial Intelligence Task Force.

Legislative Affairs Committee

- Develop a coordinated position on the proposed Special Ecological Area designation and its impact on movie ranches and filming locations.
- Coordinate with Scott Wilk, the Building Industry Association, Supervisor Kathryn Barger's office, affected property owners, and film-industry representatives.
- Identify federal land-use and Bureau of Land Management permitting reforms that would improve production access.
- Track state film-tax-credit implementation, application windows, out-of-zone provisions, and proposals involving commercial, post-production, and above-the-line incentives.
- Monitor federal film-incentive proposals and identify opportunities for regional advocacy.
- Coordinate city, county, state, and federal messaging around film production as an economic-development priority for North Los Angeles County.

Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

- Review road closures, parking, traffic control, public-safety costs, special effects, utilities, and site-access issues affecting productions.
- Identify recurring infrastructure or public-safety cost barriers that could be addressed through clearer guidance, targeted reimbursements, or coordinated local procedures.

Business Attraction Task Force

- Evaluate production-support business opportunities and adaptive reuse of vacant retail or industrial space.
- Identify realistic opportunities for equipment rental, storage, transportation, catering, security, set construction, and other recurring support services.

California Film Commission & Industry/Labor Partners

- California Film Commission: Connect regional schools and workforce partners to appropriate program contacts and resources.
- California Film Commission: Coordinate a social-media or location spotlight featuring Antelope Valley locations.
- Teamsters Local 399: Help arrange a presentation to location managers on regional assets, permitting, incentives, and support services.
- Tisha Tell: Assist with an introduction to the appropriate IATSE representatives and pathway programs.

- Josh Thomas and David Halver: Present regional resources, share local pilot data, and participate in policy, workforce, and AI follow-up.
- FilmLA and local liaisons: Continue helping productions understand locations, permitting, local resources, and out-of-zone incentive requirements.

Film Industry Working Group

- Review progress on incentives, permitting, workforce pathways, policy advocacy, marketing, and vendor engagement.
- Maintain a shared list of barriers requiring city, county, state, federal, labor, education, or industry action.
- Develop recommendations for an AV Crew Card or merchant discount network and a film-friendly business designation.
- Guide development and maintenance of regional crew, trainee, vendor, and location resources.
- Coordinate familiarization tours, location spotlights, industry presentations, and outreach to scouts and location managers.
- Identify support-business gaps and realistic opportunities for equipment, storage, transportation, catering, security, and other services.
- Evaluate results from local incentive and permit pilots and recommend adjustments based on verified activity.
- Report recommendations and progress to the AV EDGE Board and appropriate committees.

Chambers of Commerce & Business Community

- Recruit merchants, hotels, restaurants, retailers, hardware suppliers, transportation providers, and service businesses to participate in a crew-discount network.
- Develop a simple welcome packet or digital resource for productions identifying participating businesses and regional services.
- Educate businesses on production schedules, purchasing procedures, invoicing, bulk orders, parking, and extended operating hours.
- Encourage participating businesses to report aggregate redemptions and production-related activity.
- Promote film-friendly businesses through chamber, city, FilmLA, and AV EDGE channels.
- Identify recurring production requests that could support new or expanded local businesses.

Near-Term Milestones

1. Confirm participants, assignments, reported metrics, and program names during report review.
2. Schedule the first Film Industry Working Group meeting and Teamsters Local 399 presentation.
3. Complete the stackable-incentive and low-impact-permit comparison.
4. Launch planning for the student career event, crew roster, and chamber merchant network.
5. Target late September or October for the Painted Turtle and regional location familiarization tour.

Roundtable Participants & Organizations

July 30, 2026

The following names and organizations are drawn from the Film Industry Roundtable contact sheet. Attendance status and organization titles should be confirmed before final publication.

Participant	Organization / Role
Sydney Yeseta*	City of Lancaster
Zach Glynn	City of Palmdale
Josh Thomas	City of Lancaster
David Halver	California Film Commission - Palmdale Film Liaison
Tisha Tell	Teamsters Local 399
Donna Washington	FilmLA
Drew Mercy	AV EDGE
Brandy Davis	California Film Commission
Cassandra Hesseltine	Film Commissioner for Humboldt Del Norte
Jo Morgan-Kim	Adult Education Director / AVUHSD
Yetee Osunsanmi	California Film Commission

**The contact sheet lists the first name as "Syney." This draft uses "Sydney" based on the spelling used in prior AV EDGE materials; please confirm before publication.*

Contact information is maintained by AV EDGE and is not reproduced in this publication draft.