

FILM ♦ VIDEO ♦ AUDIO

Big Steps in Green Filming

BY LINDSEY JOHNSON,
WASHINGTON STATE FILM OFFICE



While "Little Miss Sunshine" was winning the hearts of the world and picking up Oscars, it also aspired to win accolades from environmentalists—not by informing about global warming, but by making efforts to use green practices during production.

The Washington State Film Office, located in the state's Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, is developing a program that encourages green filming while on location in Washington State. In a step toward doing so they have officially partnered with the Environmental Media Association (EMA).

The Environmental Media Association mobilizes the entertainment industry in a global effort to educate people about

environmental issues and inspire them into action. EMA was created in 1989 as a non-profit 501(c)3 with the simple but powerful notion that through television and film, the entire entertainment community could influence the environmental awareness of millions of people. Last year, Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" won an EMA Award for Best Documentary.

EMA has a Green Seal Award program that recognizes productions' environmentally conscious efforts regarding set construction, energy usage, resource conservation, and recycling. To qualify for this award, productions must implement as many of EMA's Checklist's "green" choices as they can, such as:

- Buying recycled content office products.
- Using Energy Star compact fluorescent light bulbs and equipment.
- Recycling everything possible.
- Reducing waste and reducing

the use of petroleum-based products such as disposable plastics and Styrofoam.

As long as a production is clearly paving its way toward environmental stewardship, EMA will acknowledge their participation.

EMA hosts an Annual Environmental Media Awards show where their Green Seal Awards honor entertainment series and film productions' efforts to be more "green" behind-the-scenes, in addition to honoring film and television productions that include an environmental message. Past winners of the award include feature films "Little Miss Sunshine," "Garden State," and "Poseidon," and television series "Days of Our Lives" and "My Name is Earl."

The Washington State Film Office is the first state to form an official partnership with EMA. The partnership aims to promote the EMA Green Seal requirements as a goal for on-location filming in

Washington, with the film office providing on-the-ground resources and tools. The hope is for Washington State to be a model for on-location green filming that other states can follow.

"We're excited about providing green filming leadership in Washington," said Suzy Kellett, manager of the Washington State Film Office. "We particularly want to educate our local independent filmmakers on the benefits that winners of a Green Seal Award receive, including recognition, publicity and networking opportunities that might not otherwise cross their path."

"The Environmental Media Association is thrilled to be partnering with the Washington State Film Office in their efforts to embrace the EMA Green Seal Standards," said Debbie Levin, EMA president. "We look to them as leaders in what we hope to be an industry-wide standard in environmentally conscious filmmaking."

continued on page 46

kc VO!CE

high impact voice. low impact studio.

for TV & radio
narrative
technical
training
medical
characters & more
via ISDN & ftp
In house ProTools solar studio
Demos online



541.350.5800

lymberli@kcvoice.com

your anytime, anywhere
solar voice of choice



BIG STEPS, continued from page 44

The Washington State Film Office is working with the Mayor's Office of Film and Music in Seattle to make green filming in Seattle easy and beneficial for all.

James Kebblas, director of the Mayor's Office of Film and Music said, "We are actively developing incentives encouraging film productions to go green. It is in everyone's interests."

The only other state to set up a green filmmaking program is New Mexico. Their program is also voluntary, and is designed to educate filmmakers about the use and availability of "green" alternative materials and to encourage environmentally responsible practices in the production office and on set.

"We have been extremely pleased with the number of productions that have recognized the importance of this program and made the extra effort to do their part," commented Jennifer Schwalenberg, deputy director of the New Mexico Film Office.

The reason green filming

programs are such a great step forward is that film by its nature can be very wasteful. For example:

- Countless script revisions require enormous amounts of paper.

- Temporary sets are built, then torn down and trashed.

- Catering uses Styrofoam plates and plastic utensils, creating excess waste.

- Multiple vans idle when taking cast/crew between base camp and set.

- Generators run for hours, releasing tons of carbon.

- Hundreds of water bottles are thrown away, instead of being reused.

- Private airplanes are chartered by executives and stars.

Although many productions are interested in the idea of green filming, there are many challenges to address before drastic change can be made.

Time is money. Every production minute that passes by is money draining from the budget. Asking productions to spend a little more time to do things differently is not usually a welcome option.

Doing things the green way

can cost more. Some studio pictures state that they are "carbon neutral." This essentially means that they calculate how much carbon their production releases into the air, and then pay to have trees planted to offset their "carbon footprint."

Studios such as Warner Bros. may have the money to plant trees, but most pictures that come to Washington are \$50,000 to \$3 million independent productions that don't have a dollar to spare, let alone 15,000 of them to plant trees.

However, most green filming options don't require extra time; they just replace what would be done with a slightly different action, and a better conscience.

That is why the focus of the Washington State Film Office and EMA is progress, creating new habits, and education.

The film office has developed a "Go Green!" film guide that lists environmentally friendly vendors and offers suggestions on how to achieve the green filming goals. The film office is also available to help research any vendor or service needed.

The EMA Green Seal checklist

and Washington State's "Go Green!" film guide help productions take steps toward using green practices while on location in Washington. This is not an all or nothing program—it is an anything is better than nothing program.

The future is bright for green filming. This is only the beginning. Like any new habit, it is awkward at first, but it will soon become a part of life, with no memory of how or why it was done any other way. This is the hope of the Washington State Film Office—that green filmmaking in Washington State will become a habit.

The film office is excited about its leadership in encouraging on-location green filmmaking in Washington State, and they believe every person and every department of a production can, with a little help and effort, leave a lighter footprint on the earth.

For more information on Washington's Green Filming program contact Lindsey Johnson or Suzy Kellett at the Washington State Film Office at 206-256-6151. For more information on the Environmental Media Association go to www.ema-online.org.

J. DANIEL DUSEK

PRODUCTION SERVICES

FILM TV COMMERCIALS

Production Manager • Location Manager • Location Scout

PHONE 206/612-4535 • FAX 425/945-0341 • EMAIL jddusek@comcast.net

The Big Fish Talent Network

(877) 424-4347

Actors throughout the Pacific Northwest • Voice talent from around the world

Search our actor database www.bigfishnw.com

Search our voice talent www.thebigfishvoicecompany.com