



March 9, 2009

## **N.Y. film, TV industry making tax credit appeal**

### **Asking lawmakers for inclusion of funds in budget outlines**

By Georg Szalai

NEW YORK -- Members of the New York film and TV sector are planning to raise further awareness and lock up lawmaker support in Albany on Wednesday for new funding for the state's production tax credits.

Unions, such as the Teamsters, along with the NY Production Alliance and its members will press for inclusion of funds in the state budget outlines that are expected from the State Assembly and Senate any time now.

This year, the state had announced that the funds for its 30% film and TV tax incentives have been used up. Since Gov. David Paterson's budget draft lacked a renewal, the industry has been lobbying state lawmakers with a letter writing campaign and other methods. The Paterson, senate and assembly budget proposals must be reconciled, so NYPA and others are working on getting their ideas into at least one of the budget outlines.

For Wednesday, NYPA and other industry reps are set to meet with lawmakers in Albany. Union and NYPA reps also will press their points in a noon press conference at the State Capitol. The Albany outing had originally been planned for earlier this month, but the effort was upended by heavy snowfall.

NYPA executive director John Johnston told The Hollywood Reporter that he feels "there is an air of intensity" about the budget process in Albany, but he couldn't say when all proposals or a final budget would be finished. The state has an April 1 target date for the final budget bill, but decisions could well come later, some say.

Douglas Steiner, chairman of Steiner Studios, who was a driving force in getting the tax program launched in 2004, said it is key to restart the NY incentives by late April to avoid losing out on the TV season.

He has spent a lot of time in Albany as of late, saying he is "cautiously optimistic" as he has "found strong support" among legislators. "I think it is only a question of how quickly

and in what form we will (get a renewal)," he told THR.

The incentives could be continued without changes and simply get new funding. But legislators could also change the way they work. For example, some have proposed reducing the tax credits percentage from 30%, while NYPA has proposed a continuation of the incentives without the current caps. "The credits have created jobs and tax revenue for the state," Johnston said. "They work, and the industry needs (planning security), so we are asking there be no caps."