

City may cash in on films Emerald Bayou Studios founders outline plan during luncheon

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Emerald Bayou Studios may not bring Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie to Lafayette, but the city does stand to gain 265 new jobs and a quarter of a billion dollars in new business sales over 10 years.

Those findings were announced Tuesday in economist Loren Scott's video presentation at the *Lights, Camera, Lafayette!* luncheon at the City Club at River Ranch. Marquetta Cheeks and Linda Thurman, co-founders of EBS, outlined the movie-making process and their plans to include Lafayette.

The New Roads-based studio plans to lease 3,000 square feet in UL's LITE Center for its entertainment technology division and post-production center, which would involve editing, global distribution and more. Scott said once the center is fully operational in 2009, it will employ 77 workers with a \$7.8 million payroll, which equates to about \$71,000 per year in wages per person.

The facility also would spark nearly \$27 million in new business sales and \$15 million in household earnings in the Lafayette area.

"A good way to think of this is to think of Lafayette as being this big economic pond," Scott said. "Into this pond, we're going to drop this rock called Emerald Bayou Studios.

"It's going to create a real big splash all by itself. When it hits that pond, it's going to create ripple effects throughout the Lafayette area economy. It's what we economists refer to as the multiplier effect."

That effect also would involve a variety of local businesses, which are needed to support the studio and filmmakers. Those businesses include dry cleaners, gardeners and caterers.

City-Parish President Joey Durel said within the next four weeks, he plans to approach the council about creating an office of film and digital development.

"My sense of urgency is that we have a window of opportunity," Durel said. "We need to get that development here.



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Linda Thurman, left, and Marquetta Cheeks of Emerald Bayou Studios speak about the film business Tuesday at the City Club at River Ranch.

Want to know more?

To learn how your business can become involved in the film industry and Emerald Bayou Studios, call Russo Ad Group at 769-1530. Learn more about the studios at www.emeraldbayoustudios.com.