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Governor touts boost to state in landing film

Gov. Ted Kulongoski's incentives, which he plans to expand, bring "Nearing Grace" to shoot in Irvington

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Gov. Ted Kulongoski sat on a director's chair with his name on it Wednesday afternoon on the front lawn of a large Irvington house turned movie location.

The governor was on hand to take a little credit for luring the independent production of "Nearing Grace" to Oregon.

"This is a tremendous asset to Oregon if we can attract more movies to come here," Kulongoski said.

Under an incentive program approved by the Legislature last year, the state will reimburse Whitewater Films for \$100,000 of its \$1 million production costs.

In addition to the incentive program, Kulongoski said, Oregon is trying to attract film companies by helping to coordinate location and logistical issues such as permits and licenses through the Film & Video Office.

The governor said he planned to introduce legislation next session to offer -- in addition to current incentives -- a 10 percent rebate on wages paid by film companies who make movies in Oregon.

"We've been wooed, and pretty much won over," said director Rick Rosenthal. He said state aid eases the risk of making independent films.

"Nearing Grace," is the story of an eccentric teenager dealing with life after his mother's death. It's based on a novel by Scott Sommer, and stars Gregory Smith, David Morse, Jordana Brewster, and Ashley Johnson.

Oregon has hosted five other feature films this year, according to the governor's office. -- James Mayer