



www.cherokeehelicopter.com

Office: 724.845.9132

Mobile: 412.897.1495

Fax: 724.845.2334

To: The Pittsburgh Film Office
Jessica Conner
The Century Building
130 7th Street, Suite 202
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Date: May 30, 2009

Re: PA Film Tax Credit

Dear Committee Members,

Please allow us to introduce ourselves, we are a family owned and operated helicopter company of over 40 years specializing in aerial filmography and production services. We have a passion for production and have been involved in working with some of the biggest names in Hollywood as well as International Production Companies from all across the globe.

Until the past 2 years, most of our business for production has been generated from states other than Pennsylvania. We are fortunate to have built a long and lasting relationship with friends in the business in LA and across the country and as we all know, it is a small world when working with one another which has been a blessing for the success and growth of our business. The downside in years past was that much of our production work was requiring us to work in states other than our own.

Since the 80's my Father, Ken Walker, has established a solid relationship with many in the feature film business which has attributed to our success and longevity in the helicopter industry. During a sizeable production entitled *Striking Distance*, we had three helicopters involved in extensive work for both camera ships as well as on camera (picture ships).

After the film boom left the Pittsburgh area and Pennsylvania region, our survival required expanding operations into the entire northeast to the Mississippi, and not limited to. During the past two years, we have done the most work in Pennsylvania than recorded, last year alone we provided camera ships, picture ships, in house wax painting, on site fuel services, our own maintenance staff and in house camera crews to feature films such as : *The Lovely Bones* (Erie, PA) *Shelter* (Pittsburgh and surrounding communities) *She's Out of My League* (Pittsburgh) *My Bloody Valentine* (Kittanning and surrounding) *Transformers II* (Allentown and Philadelphia) *Staunton Hill* (Cranberry and Pittsburgh) *The Allegheny Observatory* (Pittsburgh) and the most recent scouting for a very large feature film strongly considering the local area in the next two

months. We are on standby for a feature currently taking place in Pittsburgh who plan on shooting aerials within the next two weeks.

These are just a few projects listed; we did many commercials and other independent projects (credits available upon request). The obvious benefits not only to us as a locally based business are numerous. We not only increased our work staff, but hired numerous employees and vendors for needed services, including recent college graduate Travis McMunn from the Pittsburgh Film Institute, who at a young age has shot more projects and acted as a Tech to more shoots than many with 10 years of experience in the industry.

We purchased more local fuel, expanding the economic impact to local airports both large and small, we purchased new vehicles from local dealerships which work on production and sets, we utilized local transportation and limousine services in greater volume, we purchased food for our clients and provided housing from local hotels and restaurants, the economic advantage to providing a stimulus to bring large and small film companies to Pittsburgh is endless.

As our business is strong in the production side, we were able to see a minimum increase of 30% in profit from working in Pennsylvania. This allowed us to utilize local staff, where we normally hire out of state workers on projects outside of Pennsylvania. As previously mentioned, with the increase in profit, we needed to purchase more equipment and hire more forms of skilled staff. The result is an obvious increase in economic revitalization, an increase in sales requires an increase in the need for vendors, materials, and goods, which are purchased in Pennsylvania.

It is not just about Cherokee Helicopter Service, and our survival and growth, it is the added benefit to young college students, painters, mechanics, food services, aerial coordinators, camera rentals, and may we mention more?

During a recent scout with a Client whom we need to respect and remain anonymous, the issue after 20 + hours of scouting in Pennsylvania to Ohio, and West Virginia was who will provide the best economic benefit to bringing a multi million dollar project to their state?

They want to be here, the facilities, logistics, and geography all make the most sense, but we may not be able to offer the Film Tax Credit as our neighboring states are willing to offer. The thought of losing the type of work that came to Pennsylvania the past 2 years is very disheartening to say the least.

We trust that those considering the impact of granting the Film Tax Credit will not see it as a small niche' market only the ones experiencing financial gain, as it is not. Bringing the Film Tax Credit to our region affects families from all backgrounds, not limited to aviation and helicopters, but far greater than the camera lens can capture in one frame.

Sincerely,

Cherokee Walker