

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
PENNSYLVANIA FEDERATION OF LABOR

ALLEGHENY COUNTY LABOR COUNCIL

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees

STUDIO MECHANICS LOCAL 489

GREATER PITTSBURGH AREA

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My name is George Jaber and I am the Business Representative for IATSE Studio Mechanics Local #489. Our purpose is to crew films in our jurisdiction that covers Pittsburgh and a 50 mile radius from our city hall. The PA Film Tax Rebate has revitalized our industry in a way that is almost unimaginable. Our corner of Pennsylvania has been a destination for film makers. The rebate entices them to take advantage of our city and its locations and save production costs. The perfect balance for film production.

Since 1990, I have worked as a carpenter in the movies. The work complemented my full time role as a Theatre professor for the Community College of Allegheny County. As I sought work opportunities for myself, I was also able to recommend quality students to construction coordinators and other department keys. It has been my real pleasure to see over 20 students become members of our local and stay in Southwestern PA to work and live. Also, because of the need for crew training, CCAC has allowed me to develop a new non-credit Film Workers Training Program and several credit classes that complement our technical theatre degree. Over 50 students were enrolled this spring in courses offered.

Local 489 has more than doubled its membership since February, 2008. We had close to 100 members and now have over 210. We continue to distribute applications and with 2 current projects and more scheduled to arrive in late summer and fall, we could grow to 300 by year's end. This doesn't include all the sister unions, vendors and retailers that reap opportunities along side ours.

The Film Making community has rallied with the PA Film Tax Rebate. Efforts are being made on several fronts to create workforce training and development to build a second and third tier of trained crew members. Pittsburgh had a great reputation for work ethic but when runaway productions found tax incentives else where, our work dried up. Our incentive is competitive and it allows us the opportunity to regain productions that would shoot in another state or country.

As Business Representative, one responsibility is to report on "Member in good standing" to lending institutions. I have written 4 letters in the last 6 months for members getting mortgages. What a great pleasure to see our members doing well enough to buy new homes and, as importantly, keeping the ones they have!

The PA Film Tax Rebate levels the competitive film making process. 30 plus states offer them. Without ours, 489 members and the local and state economy will suffer tremendous damage. We will soon have the results of a Film Impact Study, commissioned by PA Labor and Industry. It will clearly show how important the Film Rebate has been and will continue to be.

Thank you for your focused time and effort regarding the PA Film Tax Rebate. Please keep it for the good of the commonwealth.

George J Jaber - Business Representative Local #489