

Are you ready for the NFL Draft?
The State News will break down
its mock draft predictions
throughout the week.

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The State News

Silver Screen Lining



KATIE RAUSCH/THE STATE NEWS

Film studies sophomore Danielle Schwartz, left, acts out a scene in "Jump Cut" with fellow actor and theater senior Phil Ashbrook Saturday at the Communication Arts and Sciences Building. Nick Constantine works the sound for the scene, while telecommunication, information studies and media senior Andy Valentine films and directs and Jordan Hahn, far right, listens to the sound. Constantine, an English and film studies senior, wrote the film.

Mich. film tax incentives spurring growth for state's industry, MSU study finds

By Kayla Habermehl
THE STATE NEWS

Andy Valentine has his sights set on seeing his work on the silver screen. The telecommunication, information studies and media senior plans to move to New York or Los Angeles in hopes of becoming involved in the movie industry — a market that Michigan has been trying to tap into with numerous incentives. These incentives give tax credits to companies for filming in Michigan and using residents and local businesses during production. Although Valentine said these incentives are encouraging, it's not enough to keep him and some other filmmakers in Michigan. But according to an MSU study, it could be the boost the state's economy needs.

"It's a waiting game — it'll probably change in six months and another state will have better incentives," Valentine said. "It's a good idea, but you have to get started in California or New York." Michigan passed the incentives, or film production cred-

it, in April 2008. They provide a refundable tax credit of up to 42 percent when a production company films in Michigan, according to the Michigan Film Office.

Several stipulations determine the incentive's amount, including where the company films in Michigan, if workers are Michigan residents and if the expenditure directly impacts the state's economy. Productions must also spend a minimum of \$50,000 in the state to earn the incentive.

MSU study

A report released in February from MSU's Center for Economic Analysis showed during the first nine months of the incentive, productions spent more

than \$66 million in 2008 and employed almost 3,000 people. It projects total spending from the productions will increase to more than \$187 million by 2012, according to the report.

In 2008, 32 productions were completed, an increase from two in 2007, according to the report.

The most surprising finding was how quickly productions moved to Michigan, said Steven Miller, director of the Center for Economic Analysis and an assistant professor in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, who conducted the study.

Miller said he was "a little surprised to what extent the services required for production can be found here in Michigan."

"Financial services, completion bonds, things of that nature, I would think would be housed in California, but those can be found in Michigan with little problem," Miller said.

English senior and co-president of the MSU Filmmakers Club Matt Larnier said in an e-mail the incentives will allow more films to be shot on location and will help Michigan's economy.

"The film incentive was the best thing (Gov. Jennifer Granholm ever did)," Larnier said. "Since everything else seems to be going wrong, Michigan needed a

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For an interactive map of movies filmed in Mich., visit stateneews.com/multimedia

TRANSPORTATION

High-speed railway could link Mich. cities with Chicago, Midwest

By Allison Bush
THE STATE NEWS

The distance from Detroit to Chicago might not seem so far if plans for a high-speed railway linking Midwest cities are approved.

The railway, which would have Chicago as its central hub linking Detroit, St. Louis and Madison, Wis., is a potential recipient of money from the federal stimulus package. President Barack Obama's administration announced last week.

The stimulus package allocated \$8 billion to high-speed rails, in addition to \$5 billion over five years laid out in the 2009 bud-

get. Obama highlighted to rail corridors that could receive federal money, including one that serves the route from Detroit to Chicago.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm, along with seven other Midwestern governors, signed a request last week for \$1.4 billion to begin upgrading the tracks.

The first-round grants, which would go toward upgrading and increasing speed on existing tracks, could be announced by the Transportation Department as early as the end of summer, according to The Associated Press.

Existing trains in the United States travel no faster than

80 mph, and building high-speed rails would allow them to travel at about 110 mph, Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said.

"Michigan is especially well situated because we own the tracks from the Indiana border up to Kalamazoo," Magliari said. "On those tracks, we have been testing speeds of 95 miles per hour."

Because passenger trains share the tracks with freight trains, the signaling system between trains will have to be improved to diminish delays as passenger trains wait for

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ANDREA ZAGATA | 15N

AWARD

Alumnus helps win Pulitzer for Free Press

By Chris Vannini
THE STATE NEWS

MSU alumnus M.L. Elrick was among the Detroit Free Press staff who were awarded a



Elrick

Pulitzer Prize on Monday for its coverage of the text messaging scandal involving former Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick.

The coverage eventually led to Kilpatrick's resignation and jailing. The Detroit Free Press staff won the award in the local reporting category.

"It tells the rest of the country what Detroit already knows, and that's that the Free Press does damn good work," Elrick said. Elrick said he was stunned when the Free Press staff won because he had convinced himself they wouldn't.

"When we finally did (win), I didn't know how to react," he said.

Elrick attended MSU from 1985 to 1990. He credited the School of Journalism as a place where he learned his craft.

"It's great to have a place to learn and you learn by doing," he said. "MSU is great because the people and the journalism school are so supportive."

Elrick wrote for The State News in 1987-88.

Members of the MSU School of Journalism said they were proud Elrick took journalism's top honor. Free Press reporters Elrick and Jim Schaefer were the first to uncover text messages in January 2008 showing that Kilpatrick and his former chief of staff, Christine Beatty, had lied under oath in a 2007 police whistleblowing trial in which they denied their relationship and their role in the firing of former Detroit police Deputy Chief Gary Brown.

Kilpatrick eventually resigned Sept. 4 last year after pleading guilty to two counts of obstruction of justice and no contest in an assault case. He served four months in jail.

"I am so proud of Mike (Elrick) and Jim and the whole Free Press staff," MSU School of Journalism Director Jane Briggs-Bunting said. "It was a courageous and difficult story that they broke."

Briggs-Bunting also is president of the State News' Board of Directors.

"It's good to see that watchdog journalism that we need," she said.

MSU visiting instructor Joe Grimm was a newsroom recruit-

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