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Hangar42 Studios To Open in Former Automotive Manufacturing Plant As State's Largest Film Production Studio

Hangar42 Studios will Feature World's Largest Sound Stage

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich, February 4, 2010 – Following on the heels of an announcement in Governor Granholm's State of the State Address last night, Hangar42 Studios (www.hangar42studios.com) today officially announces the opening of its nearly 500,000-square-foot full-service film production studio in Grand Rapids, Mich. Hangar42 Studios is Michigan's first fully-financed major film studio to open utilizing the infrastructure credit as part of the Michigan Film Credit and is a major milestone in the continued development of the state's film industry. The studio expects to create 50-60 administrative positions and 750 - 1,000 additional jobs in its first three years of operation.

Hangar42 Studios, which is owned by a group of local investors, has invested \$45 million to purchase and renovate 450,000 square feet of the former Lear Plant located at 2150 Alpine Avenue NW in Walker, and renovate it into production-ready studios, office space and post-production suites. The facility was built in 1942 by the U.S. Government as a military airplane and boat manufacturing facility and later was a General Motors and Lear plant. Many of the original 1940s structure and design elements have been preserved, while integrating high tech and energy efficient systems to create a state-of-the-art and highly versatile production facility. This includes sound stages that can be configured in a variety of ways ranging from 1,000 to 300,000-square-feet and features up to 45 foot clear ceilings, making Hangar42 Studios the largest sound stage in the world.

"This is a project that has been in the works for quite some time and represents a true public/private sector partnership. We couldn't be more excited to now officially be open for business and are very appreciative to the Michigan Film Office for all the support it's provided," said Joe Peters, principal with Hangar42 Studios. "West Michigan is an attractive option for producers with its unparalleled tax rebate structure, diverse landscape and topography for film shoots and access to a large, skilled workforce. Our vision is to establish Hangar42 Studios as the premiere full-service film studio and a go-to partner for film projects of all budgets and sizes."

While Hangar42 Studios officially opens for business this month, film projects have already utilized the studio during the renovation process including "The Gun", starring Val Kilmer and rapper 50 Cent, shot at Hangar42 Studios in December 2009 and employed nearly 200 people onsite. Studio executives are currently in talks with several major film studios and film producers who are interested in the space for future projects.

As a full-service film production studio, Hangar42 Studios will offer production and pre- and post-production space, a state-of-the-art screening room, ample office space for clients and a full range of concierge services to assist producers with everything they need while shooting in Michigan. Services range from location scouting, lodging and couriers to props, security and catering in the studio's 12,000-square-foot commissary.

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“One of the unique offerings of Hangar42 Studios will be our full-service concierge services program which will truly make us a one-stop shop for film producers as we’ll have a dedicated team to assist them with every aspect of production,” said Peters. “We already have some preferred vendors lined up to serve as partners for specific goods and services and are working now to build out our roster to ensure that we have a trusted local partner for anything and everything a producer may need for their project.”

Peters added: “Hangar42 Concierge Services will multiply the economic impact to the local West Michigan community and tie more companies, people and jobs to the growing film industry.”

Hangar42 Studios has hired San Francisco-based Studio O + A to design the interior space with the goal of eventually creating more than 50,000 square feet of production offices. The goal of the design is to meld contemporary elements, while celebrating the building’s 1940s retro feel. Studio O+A and founder Primo Orpilla have created fun, unique, high energy office space for companies like Facebook, eBay, PayPal, Williams Sonoma and Levi Strauss and Co.

Hangar42 Studios purchased the facility from John and Jack Buchanan with Alpinist Endeavors. Jack Buchanan, who also serves as president of local commercial real estate firm Blue Bridge Ventures, is currently buying out his father’s ownership in Alpinist. Buchanan, who played an integral role in putting the project together, will serve in an advisory capacity to the studio.

“This facility has a rich history dating back to the 1940s, and it’s exciting for me to see it make its transformation from a 1940s warehouse to a premier 21st century film studio,” said Buchanan. “We’ve seen the early fruits of this with two films and I look forward to working with Hangar42 Studios in an advisory role. Based on the buzz and activity we’ve already created for the studio, I am highly optimistic about the future for Hangar42 Studios.”

Buchanan added: “The vision was always adaptive re-use for this building when my father and I purchased it in 2006, and it’s rewarding to be able to collaborate with Joe to put this innovative project together.”

Since the state of Michigan passed its film tax credit in 2008, more than 30 major productions were filmed in Michigan in 2008 and approximately another 50 in 2009. Michigan’s film tax incentive is the most generous in the nation with up to 42% in tax refunds available on production costs for motion pictures shot in the state.

Buchanan noted the support of the City of Walker, State Representatives Robert Dean and David Hildenbrand, in helping with the pre-requisite steps needed to bring the Lear project to fruition and, ultimately, leading to its sale and re-use as Hangar42 Studios.

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