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Jindal signs movie, sound, vehicle tax credit laws

By Mike Hasten mhasten@gannett.com
and Alexandyr Kent akent@gannett.com

BATON ROUGE — Louisiana movie industry officials applauded Thursday the signing into law of legislation designed to help the state regain prominence as a premier location for making movies.

Gov. Bobby Jindal signed HB848 by Rep. Cameron Henry, R-New Orleans, and vetoed similar legislation authored by Sen. Robert Adley, R-Benton. Adley amended Henry's bill in the Senate to align with his SB245, so instead of keeping the current 25 percent movie production tax credit, it increases the amount to 30 percent.

The governor said he chose Henry's bill over Adley's because of "an amendment to HB898 that requires greater investment in Louisiana banks, which I strongly favor."

Adley said he was "not surprised at all" that the governor chose to veto his bill, although it picked up an amendment in the House that the Department of Economic Development said, "it just had to have. That's OK. Let them play their childish games, but the end result will help some people."

Shreveport-based producer Lampton Enochs said "I'm obviously thrilled" that the new provision is in place. "This has been a lot of work by a lot of folks.

"I think this means that we can now reach out to the studios and the independent producers and say that Louisiana is committed as ever to the film industry," he said. "The state that so many people have turned to for successful filmmaking is right back there in the heat of competition."

Diego Martinez, president of Shreveport-based Studio Operations, a division of Nu Image/Millennium Films, said, "It means that we're going to continue to make movies here. We've got two projects that we've been deciding on where to go, and they are definitely coming to Louisiana now."

Studio Operations plans to begin construction of a studio in Shreveport's Ledbetter Heights neighborhood by the end of July.

The movie credit was one of nine tax incentive bills signed into law Thursday.

Six of the measures will make Louisiana more competitive with other states, Jindal said.

Besides HB898, the governor signed HB458 by Rep. Kirk Talbot, R-River Ridge, extending the sound recording production and infrastructure tax credit program; SB277 by Sen. Ann Duplessis, D-New Orleans, extending and expanding the digital interactive media tax credit; HB790 by Rep. Hunter Greene, R-Baton Rouge, extending the research and development tax credit; HB110 by Rep. Jane Smith, R-Bossier City, providing a tax credit for clean burning motors; and HB215 by Rep. Nita Hutter, R-Chalmette, creating a cargo and infrastructure tax credit for Louisiana ports.

Smith's legislation grants 50 percent refundable tax breaks for converting an existing vehicle or purchasing a new one that burns natural gas. It also offers breaks for developing filling stations for

natural gas-powered vehicles and installing one at home.

Also, the bill doubles the current credit for purchasing hybrid vehicles — the lesser of 10 percent of the vehicle cost or \$3,000.

In approving Talbot's sound recording bill, Jindal vetoed similar legislation by Rep. Mike Michot, R-Lafayette.

Michot said he didn't have a problem with the governor's choice because Talbot's bill has a provision that calls for the Legislature to review the program to make sure it's working as planned.

Jindal called the tax incentives "critical tools to give Louisiana a bright economic future. By signing these bills, we're ensuring that we not only have the ability to remain economically competitive, but that we can continue to move our state forward by making Louisiana the greatest place in the world to find a great-paying job and raise a family."

Besides the tax credits, Jindal signed:

- HB189 by Greene, which provides sales tax exemption for meals furnished to the staff and students of educational institutions and other organizations.
 - HB 618 by Greene, which eliminates the \$10 minimum corporate franchise tax.
 - SB 52 by Sen. Rob Marianneaux, D-Livonia, which authorizes an annual "sales tax holiday" for the purchase of firearms and supplies during the Second Amendment Weekend (first consecutive Friday-Sunday in September). Jindal vetoed a House bill that granted a second tax-free gun sales three-day period after Thanksgiving.
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