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Written by Andrew Deichler (gdeichler@costar.com)

Green Screens: Who Will Have the First LEED Certified Movie Studio?

Second Line Stages Breaks Ground in New Orleans, Aims for LEED Silver

Construction of Second Line Stages is underway in New Orleans, and it's poised to be the first green movie studio in the United States.

The 90,000-square-foot studio is being constructed on a brownfield site in the Lower Garden District. Second Line Stages is aiming for LEED Silver certification for all aspects of the project, which includes three sound stages, production offices and a screening theater. The \$32 million facility will also feature a training and resource center aimed at helping area residents find jobs in the entertainment industry. Delivery is slated for December.

Second Line Stages could bring jobs to "an area still challenged by the effects of Hurricane Katrina," said Deborah La Franchi, co-founder of the National New Markets Fund, which is providing financing for the project. The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) fund is the brainchild of La Franchi, president of Strategic Development Solutions (SDS) and Belden Hull Daniels, president of Economic Innovation International. It was designed to invest in development projects that serve low-income communities.

Funding is also being provided by developer and New Orleans activist Susan Brennan, Whitney Bank, state and federal New Markets and Historic Tax Credits, Louisiana Infrastructure Tax Credits, CityScape Capital Group and the Valued Advisor Fund.

"As the nation's first green-from-the-ground-up studio complex, this project has the potential to bring social, environmental and economic benefits to New Orleans while helping encourage diversification of the regional economy," La Franchi noted.

But while Second Lines Stages may become the first LEED certified studio, it would not be the first to pursue sustainability. Two studios in New Mexico are also seeing green.

Albuquerque Studios, currently filming the latest movie in the Terminator series, is located in the environmentally conscious master planned community Mesa Del Sol. The studio has expressed a commitment to sustainability; however, it is unclear if Albuquerque Studios is aiming for LEED certification.

Santa Fe Studios also has a shot at being one of the first green movie studios in the country, and is due to break ground early this year. Delivery of the proposed 500,000-square-foot facility is slated for year's end.