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## TV series 'major shot in the arm' for Edmonton

By CBC News  
CBC News

*The production of a new television series in Edmonton is helping to boost the city's film and TV industry, says the city's film commissioner.*

The production of a new television series in Edmonton is helping to boost the city's film and TV industry, the city's film commissioner says.

Production of eight one-hour episodes of the drama Blackstone began Monday at the southside strip club, Diamonds Gentlemen's Club.

The entire series, produced by Prairie Dog Film + Television in association with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), Showcase and Canwest Broadcasting, will be shot in and around Edmonton.

Film commissioner Brad Stromberg describes the production of Blackstone as a "major shot in the arm" for the Alberta capital.

"It's a magnificent thing. I think that people are perhaps not aware of the depth and breadth of the impact of this industry on this city," he said.

"There's carpenters that are working full-time. There are electricians that are going to be working full-time. There are designers and costume people that benefit."

Blackstone, which is scheduled to premiere on APTN and Showcase in early 2011, follows the fictional lives of residents on the Blackstone Indian Reserve.

It stars actors Carmen Moore, Eric Schweig and Michelle Thrush.

The show's pilot won several awards and received huge audience response when it premiered last year on APTN.

Production uses local crews, actors: director

Series director and executive producer Ron E. Scott said he hopes the use of local crews and talent will inspire other film and television production companies to follow suit.

"What I'm trying to do is create an environment in Edmonton - in northern Alberta, if you will - that we bring scripted shows here. And I'm not saying we're exclusive, but I'm saying that it's very challenging to do," Scott said.

"And we're trying to do it within the format - to hire local crews, hire local actors as much as we can."

Filming at the strip club is expected to end Friday, with the cast and crew heading to the University of Alberta on Monday before shooting downtown.

Filming is expected to wrap up Sept. 4 before Blackstone heads into post-production, Jesse Szymanski, spokeswoman for the series told CBC News.

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