

Atlanta JEWISH TIMES

TV, Film Beautify Atlanta's Economy - including the Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery Fields By Ben Stong, M.D.

The Atlanta Jewish Film Festival is expected to attract nearly 40,000 moviegoers in its 18th year with a roster of more than 70 films representing more than 25 countries. As we prepare for this exciting, international cultural event it is well worth noting that thanks in part to the film and TV industry, Atlanta is one of the strongest job markets in the country.

Metro Atlanta recently hit an all-time record for the total number of jobs. How did this happen? After all, globalization marches forward, and staying competitive is harder than ever, right?



Well, it happened because of a lot of hard work and a lot of entrepreneurial know-how. In addition, numerous people in business and government had to be willing to go out on a limb to bring nontraditional jobs to town. Georgia's generous tax incentive for TV and film production, known as the Entertainment Industry Investment Act, has lured production companies from New York, Hollywood and other towns. Georgia is the No. 1 filming location in the world. Gov. Nathan Deal announced film and television productions generated \$9.5 billion in economic impact in fiscal 2017, including \$2.7 billion in direct spending. Wow.

I know about this surging local industry in part because some of those thousands of industry employees now come to my medical offices, including Kalos Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Kalos Hair Restoration and the K Spa, for the specialized treatments for which they used to have to travel back to New York or La-La Land. Atlanta's TV and film industry has been a boost for many sectors of the economy, including plastic surgery and other cosmetic services. After all, while some actors on location here who must look camera-ready will plan major nips and tucks, such as face-lifts and liposuction, months in advance, many other "faster acting" procedures are available these days, including touch-ups like injections of fillers, laser procedures, liquid eye-lifts, microdermabrasion and teeth whitening.

This market for minimally invasive procedures has expanded rapidly, starting with the Botox boom. Just imagine how crucial it must be for those on site for a shoot in Atlanta to be able to readily get these services locally. It's invaluable. And these services are not just for the actors, but also for all the TV and film support staffers who just want to look their best. This is a long list, including producers, editors, graphic artists, caterers, security personnel, camera operators, stagehands — you get the idea.

All these jobs being brought to town mean that workers in other industries (like mine) can also help inject vibrancy into the local economy by buying homes, renting offices, taking families out to dinner, sending kids to college, employing people, paying taxes (not to mention mortgages), etc. The add-on benefits are huge. So as we prepare for the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival, this is a great time to remind ourselves that just by kicking back and enjoying a new film or chilling out by binge-watching a new series on Amazon, Hulu or Netflix, we are supporting our own local economy. How cool is that?

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