

By Ruth Ratny  
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**Incentive proposal ups the stakes  
Possibility of 30% and 3 year extension, legislators tell IPA members**

The promise of a 30% tax incentive in place for three years was made Monday night by the three state legislative sponsors of the Illinois filmmakers' tax incentives, at an IPA party Monday night in their honor.

IPA president Lars Ullberg thanked Rep. Skip Saviano (R-River Grove) and Senators Ken Dunkin and Rickey Hendon (both Democrats-Chicago) for their consistent sponsorship of the incentives bill at a party at RDS attended by 250 IPA members.

The legislators, who have sponsored incentives since the first 15% tax credit was enacted in 2003, collectively stated that their goal this year is to fight for a 30% tax credit effective for three years – two years at the least – in their respective branches of the legislature.

The higher incentive would replace the current 20%, renewable each year, which was enacted in 2003. It replaced a less effective 15%/one year bill.

Sen. Dunkin (D-Chicago) struck a chord with IPA members, who applauded when he said the city also should offer incentives.

Trying to persuade City Hall to give filmmakers a break on the 6% use tax, for one, has been a cause for which various groups have consistently struck out.

**Illinois ranks 21st in states with film incentives**

When Ullberg brought up a comparison of state incentive programs that ranked Illinois 21st out of the 40 states, Dunkin exclaimed, "That's not good enough. We should be number one, or at least in the top three."

Sen. Hendon (D-Chicago) noted that Senate president Emil Jones has been responsible for the incentives' single year renewal, but this could change with Jones' retirement in November, "and if I'm elected senate president," he joked.

Each year has been a fight to maintain the incentives for the film industry, Hendon added, because his colleagues can't see the value of a tax break "for Hollywood filmmakers."

But Hendon, a one time filmmaker (hence his nickname, "Hollywood" Hendon) has been able to overcome their objections by showing solid financial evidence of the bill's effectiveness over the past two years of substantial revenues from visual media production.

(For 2009, the IPA had asked for a five-year extension, but will be extremely satisfied with three years.)

The son of a filmmaker, Saviano had lived the experience first-hand, told how his father was able to raise and support a family and enabled him to go to college and said he knows that thousands of people in Illinois are able to do the same with the help of the incentives.

IPA is the only state film organization that funds the Springfield lobbying on behalf of the visual media industry in Illinois.

The IPA party was deemed one of the most successful in its six years of operation, in terms of large attendance – “a serious crowd,” Ullberg noted, an appropriate venue and above-average catering spread.

Mark Androw, Story, and Dan Moore, DGA, headed the party committee. Committee members were Rosemary Deahl, whose Big Deahl production company contributed the catering by Honest Foods, Zoe Borys of Fletcher Camera, Beth Redfearn of Story and actress Grace Phillips.

RDS provided the ideal setting on a small stage, with access to its outdoor roof garden with spectacular city views.

The IPA's new face and energy can be seen in its new website, [www.illinoisproduction.com](http://www.illinoisproduction.com).