

MINISTER UPBEAT OVER REVAMP

Excitement as Cape Town Film Studios takes shape

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THE CAPE Town Film Studios (CTFS) under construction near Khayelitsha will be ready to produce its first movie by July.

Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies hailed the studios as the industrialisation of filmmaking in the country and said it could have positive spin-offs for other industries.

The studios received a R16.3 million grant from the Department of Trade and Industry.

Davies, on a site visit to the studios yesterday, said that while the country had made great progress in film production, and some movies had received international recognition, the industry was regarded as strategic because of its enormous potential.

When complete, the studios would be able to attract major film productions to the country.

"We see it as having many benefits. This (studios) particular venture will provide for manufacturing facilities. I think it is very significant. I think this is just fantastic. This is important for the film industry in the country. I can see that we are building a world-class facility, here and I'm pleased with the progress," Davies said.

CTFS chief executive Nico Dekker said construction started in March 2008 and the studio would be open for business in July.

He said that with the trend towards big-budget films, the economic benefit locally could be about R1bn a year. While the studio was expected to attract

major feature film productions, local producers would be charged "sweetheart" production rates, he said.

Dekker said 7 580 jobs would be created in the first five years and that the studios would become the first permanent base for local filmmakers.

"The dream has become reality now," he said.

Features of the studios include 7 000m² of soundproof stages, fully equipped production offices, set construction workshops and a film laboratory.

Dekker said workers from communities within a 15km radius from the site were given preference for jobs during the construction phase. Plans were in place for an academy to offer technical training for people

who aspired to work in the movie industry, he said.

CTFS chairman and film producer Anant Singh said: "It's historic – the idea of a film studio created in South Africa. It is an objective I set myself many years ago.

"It is very exciting to be able to come into this facility now with the walls going up, the gantry almost six storeys high – and to just feel the dream. We are very excited that this facility will open in the middle of next year. The fact that it has taken a while has been a bit annoying, but at the end of the day, when you do something, do it properly. We are seeing the fruits of everybody's commitment. It is really exciting and it's great for Cape Town," Singh said.



HOLDING UP: Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies and Cape Town Film Studios head Anant Singh inspect the studio under construction near Faure. It will be ready by July to produce its first movie.

Picture: IAN LANDSBERG