Calling All Extras

Acting opportunities for students

By Wade Faast

Staff Reporter

The New Mexico film industry is in full swing with projects across the state and they need background actors, which is an opportunity for CNM students to make some extra money said Lorrie Latham with Latham Casting.

Latham casting is looking to cast extras for an upcoming six part western series that will start shooting in mid-August and run through early December, she said.

The production will require at least 2,200 actors, with many being recurring roles she said.

According to Latham that is not the only major project going on, other local casting firms are looking for extras daily.

Extras should be prepared for long days though because most days will require twelve or more hours of filming, she said.

 Most background roles pay minimum wage, which can add up quickly with any time over 8 hours in one day paying overtime, said former CNM and current UNM student Clayton Salberg.

“It’s not a way to make a living, but more of a hobby,” he said.

Clayton started doing background work in April of 2015 during his last year at CNM, he said.

In the summer of 2015 he landed the role of a fighter pilot on Independence Day Resurgence, he said.

The days are long and many times there can be hours of downtime, which allowed him to work on homework in-between scenes, Salberg said.

Salberg majored in Health Sciences while at CNM but after working on movie and television sets he switched his major to theater when he transferred to UNM, he said.

Networking through Facebook groups for local casting calls can allow students to keep an eye out for extra casting calls that need actors, he said.

Facebook background actor groups offer people new to the industry a chance to ask questions and get advice from more experienced individuals, casting directors will also use these groups to put out casting calls especially ones that come up at the last minute, Latham said.

If interested in getting started in background acting, Latham recommended going to the City of Albuquerque’s How to be an Extra information webpage, the page provides FAQ’s on being an extra along with links to several casting companies here in New Mexico.

One of the important pieces of getting into the field is a headshot, it doesn’t need to be professional or high quality, it should not be a selfie though, she said.

Latham advised that the most important aspects in a headshot are that it be clear and not too close up, casting directors want to see your hair, face, and body type, she said.

Links

Latham Casting:

Lathamcastin.com

City of Albuquerque’s How to be an Extra information webpage:

filmabq.com/how-to-be-an-extra/