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Jan. 27, 2013

It's still too early to tell what effect recent legislation will have on Alabama's ability to attract film and television production companies. But if you ask Kathy Faulk, director of the Alabama Film Office, the marquee might as well read "Welcome to Alabama."

The figures aren't in for just how much production companies spent in Alabama in 2012, but in 2011 those companies spent \$22.5 million in the state, according to the film office.

A bill passed by the Alabama Senate in 2012 boosted the amount the film office can offer those production companies in tax incentives, up from \$10 million in 2012 to \$15 million in 2013. In 2014 that figure will increase to \$20 million.

The amendment didn't take effect until this month, but, she said, Faulk is certain it will help bring more film and television production companies to the state.

The film office didn't have to turn any projects away due to lack of funds in 2012, but toward the end of the year Faulk said production companies knew the \$10 million was running low.

"They follow it very closely. The payroll companies pay close attention to that and they call us monthly, wanting an update on what's been spent, so they know when to stop asking," Faulk said.

Alabama can't currently compete with neighboring states like Georgia — with its established film industry infrastructure — or Louisiana — with its massive

incentives and popular filming destination of New Orleans — Faulk said.

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Lights, camera, Noccoalula

Local independent filmmaker Steven Satterwhite's first feature-length film doesn't qualify for some of the \$15 million in tax incentives that will be available by the film office in 2013. He'd have to spend at least \$500,000 on the production to get those tax breaks.

Instead, Satterwhite asked for help from friends, borrowed classic cars — the film is set during WWII — and kindly asked people if he could shoot at their Gadsden homes.

For a few brief moments on Sunday morning, the 1940s will make a comeback at Noccoalula Falls in Gadsden, where Satterwhite hopes as many as a hundred extras will show up in period dress to help with the final scene of his film, "Survive the Innocent."

The Gadsden native and Jacksonville State University student has been filming since February 2012, and with the help of those friends and family, and on a shoestring budget, he's making his dream of creating a full-length feature film come true.

It's a period movie, and since money was a big factor, Satterwhite kept the number of sets to a minimum.

"Most of the film happens inside that one house," Satterwhite said. "I had to buy antiques for an entire house, so it wasn't completely cheap, but yeah. It's a lot cheaper if you only have to do it for one house."

Satterwhite's 11-year-old son Lucas is the main character in the film, which he describes as an alternate history set in World War II, where a boy finds himself alone in America.

The film is slated to be finished in September, Satterwhite said, and will be submitted

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Noccarola fans parking lot. Anyone who would like to be an extra should dress as much as possible in 1940s clothing, Satterwhite said.

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