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THE ACTOR'S
RESOURCE

SAG Launches Fundraising for Actors Resource Center

by Nicole Kristal

Tired of paying exorbitant fees to gain access to editing bays, screening rooms, and rehearsal spaces? The Screen Actors Guild Foundation's plans for a new Actors Resource Center might interest you. "Right now it's a concept," said Marcia Smith, executive director of the non-profit SAG Foundation. "We're looking for funding." The SAG Foundation plans to unveil the architectural design for the center at the Argyle Hotel July 16.

The center will fill 15,000 square feet on the mezzanine level of the SAG building, located on Wilshire Boulevard. The office space, which has been vacant, features an interior without windows. "It's not particularly desirable for offices, but for what we want, it would work perfectly because you don't want a screening room with windows or a rehearsal space with windows," said Smith.

The facility, which Smith said should be completed by mid-2006, would feature a rehearsal space, an editing bay, screening room, library, and a sound-proof room to record voice reels. Acting workshops, networking events, and classes will be offered at the site, as well as a bulletin board for housing and audition announcements. Though the project's funding will determine who will be allowed to use the space, Smith anticipates the center being available for use by members of SAG, AFTRA, and/or Equity.

"The reason why we felt that it was well overdue is that there is no place in Los Angeles where actors can freely congregate," said Smith. "There are plenty of

places where they can go and spend a lot of money to do these things, but there's no place where you know they can go and spend very little or nothing."

Smith hopes the center will provide a place for the 70,000 union actors in Los Angeles to socialize, work, and learn about the business of acting. But to make the Actors Resource Center a reality, the Foundation must secure adequate funding.

"The problem is that when someone is a really huge name, getting in touch with them is almost impossible. Try to get to Tom Cruise if you're not Katie Holmes," said Smith.

On the other hand she hopes to attract major investors new to Hollywood, such as the Maloof Brothers or dot-com investors, eager to gain further entry into the entertainment business. Major contributors could have the Actors Resource Center facility named after them. Various editing bays and other rooms in the facility will also be named after donors. Currently the SAG Foundation has received only enough money to cover the architectural expense for the project.

"People give what they can. Five dollars from an out-of-work actor is like \$5,000 from somebody else," said Smith. "Every dollar is a good dollar." Smith notes that unless the Foundation receives a sizable contribution by Labor Day, the project could be in jeopardy. "If we could get one large check and make an announcement like that, then I think other people will contribute," said Smith.

Actors interested in making a donation to the project can contact the SAG Foundation through SAG's website: www.sag.org.