

**Oral Testimony Before the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee Public Hearing**  
**Submitted By: Tracie Wilson, SVP, Programming & Development for NBCU's Stamford Media Center**  
**Monday, March 7, 2011**

Members of the Committee, Senator Daily and Representative Widlitz, on behalf of NBCUniversal, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today regarding Section 6 of Senate Bill 1007, and the Digital Media and Motion Picture Tax Credit Program. As Senior Vice President of Programming & Development for NBCU's Stamford Media Center, I have seen firsthand the success of this program, and am excited to share my observations with you and the rest of the finance committee.

Last February, I testified in front of the Commerce Committee about the film tax credit, and as I was reviewing my testimony, I was amazed with how Stamford Media Center has grown and laid down strong roots in the community over the past year. For those who are unfamiliar with NBCU's initial investment in Stamford, I'd like to recap some key information before moving onto new developments. I have provided hard copies of my oral testimony to the committee, and have also provided fact sheets that capture NBCU's economic impact and community involvement since our relocation to Stamford.

- In April of 2009, NBCUniversal announced the creation of Stamford Media Center and the relocation of three shows – The Jerry Springer Show, The Steve Wilkos Show, and Maury – in response to the incentives offered through Connecticut's film tax credit program.
- Initial investment in infrastructure upgrades by NBCU totaled approximately \$5.5 million.
- As a result of NBCU's lease agreement with the Stamford Center for the Arts (SCA), SCA was able to emerge from bankruptcy, and continue its programming. In absence of NBC's agreement to lease the Rich Forum, the State would have been forced to assume financial responsibility for SCA.
- NBCU is currently renting approximately 68,000 sq. ft. of space for \$109,502 per month.
- Stamford Media Center (SMC) employs approximately 230 people including producers, directors, production assistants, stagehands, accountants, technical crew, security guards and freelancers during a production season.

The nature of our programming involves loading and unloading audiences of over 100 people several times a day, 70% of which are traveling from out-of-town to visit and spend money in Connecticut. This results in increased foot traffic to Stamford's shopping malls, movie theaters and restaurants.

- During 15 months of production on Maury, The Jerry Springer Show and The Steve Wilkos Show, SMC has attracted over 115,000 audience members to the downtown Stamford area.
- SMC's three talk shows have also brought 8,214 guests to the greater Stamford area who, in turn, have spent \$1.1M at local businesses including shopping malls, restaurants and movie theaters.

Today, with 15 months of production under our belts, we are thrilled with our decision to relocate to Stamford. The continued support we receive from state and local officials, residents and the business

community is astounding and we make every effort to maintain this relationship by utilizing local vendors and services. You'll also hear testimony from one of NBC's favorite vendors, Jami Sherwood from Simply signs, who has accompanied me to the Capitol today.

- SMC uses local car service companies and over 13 different hotel chains in Stamford, Norwalk and Greenwich for the travel of all guests appearing in SMC productions.
  - To date, SMC has spent \$1,131,425 on local car services and \$1,002,000 on 5,000 room nights at local hotels to support the SMC production schedule.
- SMC has spent over \$14 million with Connecticut-based vendors in just 1.5 years of production. Local businesses benefiting from SMC's presence in Stamford include Atlantic Pizza, Wolfe's Cleaners, Katie's Gourmet, Remo's Pizza, Simply Signs, Building One Cleaning, Fairfield County Vending, Printech, Encon Heating/Air, ABC Affordable Bus Charters, Garden Catering, Pitney Bowes, ABM Janitorial, Ready Carpet, American Landscape and City Carting.

An indication of NBC's commitment to Stamford is the list of business and community organizations with which we partner on a regular basis. I am honored to serve on the boards of the Stamford Chamber of Commerce, Stamford Downtown Special Services District and the Stamford Center for the Arts, and my staff and our hosts have become actively involved in the community as well. I'm sure many of you saw Maury Povich and Connie Chung on the float at the Thanksgiving Day Parade, but you may not have heard about:

- My colleagues and I visiting the Toquam Magnet School to read to kindergarten students for the Volunteer Center of Southwestern Fairfield County's 9th Annual Business to Books Read-a-thon.
- Steve Wilkos inviting young adults from local colleges and universities to shoot a special double episode focusing on issues effecting college students.
- SMC's Vinnie Fusco, participating in Curtain Call's "Dancing with the Stars" fundraiser to support the Stamford not-for-profit theatrical organization, which I have agreed to participate in this year.
- Maury Povich and the SMC staff donating and wrapping gifts to support St. Luke's LifeWorks Annual Holiday Gift Collection.

We consider Stamford our home. Unfortunately, business is business, and our ability to remain and thrive in Connecticut is contingent on the continuation of the film, television and digital media tax credit. NBCOlympics.com and NBCSports.com are also based in Stamford, and NBCU is currently in negotiations to bring two new third-party productions which will create approximately 30 new jobs at SMC within the next month. The production of Maury, The Jerry Springer Show, The Steve Wilkos Show and all future NBCU productions in Connecticut will continue as long as the film tax credit remains in place. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.