



Mayor Bloomberg, Kaufman Astoria Studios celebrate ground breaking

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Mayor Michael Bloomberg recently joined George Kaufman and Hal Rosenbluth of Kaufman Astoria Studios to break ground on Stage K, a new \$22 million film and television production studio in the Astoria neighborhood. The 40,000 s/f studio will be designed like studio compounds with "backlots" found in major West Coast motion picture studios. Construction of the new studio, which is estimated to create 400 new independent production-related jobs through film or television production companies leasing space within the studio, is expected to be completed next summer. The unveiling took place at the site of the new studio on 36th St., between 34th and 35th Aves., across the street from the existing historic studio. Also joining the mayor at the groundbreaking were deputy mayor for economic development Robert Lieber, mayor's office of film, theatre and broadcasting (MOFTB) commissioner Katherine Oliver, governor's office for motion picture and television development executive director Patricia Kaufman, economic development corp. (EDC) president Seth Pinsky, Queens borough president Helen Marshall, assembly member Michael Gianaris, former council speaker Peter Vallone, Sr., ABC's Life on Mars executive producer Josh Appelbaum, the executive producers of Showtime's new show Nurse Jackie, WFAN Radio senior vice president and general manager Don Bouloukus and vice president, sports programmer Mark Chernoff and Sesame Street's Elmo.

"The importance of diversifying our economy is more obvious today than ever, and continued investments in New York City's entertainment industry is one of ways we've been doing it," said mayor Bloomberg. "Since 2002, we've expanded our Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting and made strategic investments in the industry. Under the leadership of commissioner Oliver, those efforts are paying off. We've seen a 92% increase in shooting days since 2002, and today our film and television production industry generates \$5 billion a year in economic activity and supports 100,000 jobs. Governor Paterson and the state legislature share our commitment to growing the industry, having recently approved an expansion of the state production incentive program. The \$22 million expansion of Kaufman Astoria Studios will greatly bolster our efforts to grow the industry by providing much needed studio space. I look forward to seeing the results of the bright lights of Stage K on the big screen in the Big Apple."

Stage K was designed by award-winning architect Janson Design Group, and includes construction of a 40,000 s/f facility. Stage K will feature an 18,000 s/f sound stage for film and television productions along with 22,000 s/f of support space that will consist of dressing rooms, offices, prop rooms, makeup rooms and a carpentry shop. The \$22 million project was made possible through a roughly \$5 million grant from the city administered through a funding agreement with New York City Economic Development Corp., and \$2 million in grant and loan assistance from the Empire State Development Corp.

