



Posted on Wed, Nov. 04, 2009

## 'Burn Notice' star touts film industry in Tallahassee

BY LEE LOGAN

Herald/Times Tallahassee Bureau

Better known as a spy who uses special ops training to help people, Jeffrey Donovan played a lobbyist for the TV news cameras Tuesday to highlight the economic impact his show brings to South Florida.

The star of USA Network's top-rated *Burn Notice*, Donovan was at the Capitol to lobby for more state film incentives and to help announce the new film, entertainment and television legislative caucus.

Flanked by about a dozen lawmakers, Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink and State Film Commissioner Lucia Fishburne on the Fourth Floor Rotunda, Donovan relayed one example of how his show pumps up South Florida's economy.

While filming an episode in the second season, the film crew befriended a flower vendor near Hialeah. The next season, a writer for the show crafted an episode around a similar flower vendor and the show paid \$10,000 to rent out his shop for a day.

"The impact locally was, for this gentleman, enormous," Donovan said.

Fishburne said *Burn Notice* has paid more than \$28.4 million in Florida wages and is responsible for booking more than 7,000 hotel room nights.

Of the \$10.8 million incentive budget in the current fiscal year, the TV show will receive \$5.2 million.

"It has truly become an incentives game," Fishburne said.

State Rep. Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, D-Tallahassee, formed the new film industry caucus, which counts 20 lawmakers as members.

"The purpose of the caucus is to put a spotlight on the industry so we can regain our competitive edge," she said.

Florida has slipped from third in the country behind California and New York to out of the top 10 in terms of the number of productions shot in the state.

---

© 2009 Miami Herald Media Company. All Rights Reserved.  
<http://www.miamiherald.com>