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Bright film future in Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Business Times - by [Tim Schooley](#)

Outside the [Pittsburgh Film Office](#), it might be difficult to find anyone as connected to the lineup of films being produced in western Pennsylvania as [Jared Leland](#).

Head of the Entertainment Law Group at [Keevican Weiss Bauerle & Hirsch](#) LLC, Leland is the attorney for and a minority partner in [Mogul Mind Studio](#), the Strip District-based company working to turn the 330,000-square-foot former Pittsburgh Flatroll facility into a full-service studio campus. The company also represents the investment banking interests of Green Tree-based Smithfield Street Productions.

Smithfield opened up the region's first substantial new sound stage in Island Studios in McKees Rocks last year and is led by Leland's cousin by marriage, Michael Dolan, a member of the Donahue family that is a major owner of the publicly traded Downtown mutual fund giant [Federated Investors](#).

Yet Leland, who also represents Steve McEveety, a Hollywood-based producer whose credits include the Mel Gibson films "Braveheart" and "The Passion of the Christ," doesn't see himself in the middle of a competition between his clients' bidding for each new Hollywood film to come here. Instead, he believes Mogul Mind and Smithfield are well-positioned to grow and develop their own strengths.

"I think there is a sense in the entertainment business that one producer is strictly competing against another when, in fact, they often times are very different and have a place and an opportunity to be very successful," Leland said. "We need to be successful, and successful as a whole."

Leland's immersion in the region's film industry has helped lead him to develop a radio program on the moviemaking business expected to debut this month on Pittsburgh Business Radio, 1360-AM. Likely to be called "Jared Leland: Live from the Red Carpet," the program is tentatively planned to run for an hour twice a month, with a final time to be determined.

With last year seeing a record amount of film production in western Pennsylvania at the same time that

opposition to Pennsylvania's film tax credit continues to fight it, Leland expects the subject to generate plenty of discussion.

"I think there's certainly enough to talk about. The entertainment industry is burgeoning in the commonwealth and western Pennsylvania," Leland said. "There certainly are plenty of interested parties to speak with, both proponents and opponents."

John Poister, general manager of 1360-AM, said Leland's guest appearances inspired the idea for a regular show.

"We did get a very strong response from listeners when he was on," Poister said.

Leland hopes to use the show to demonstrate the growing role film production is playing here.

"A lot of people just really are not aware of the entertainment industry here in western Pennsylvania until they stumble on a production on their street, or in their neighborhood," he said. "It is one of the most pursued destinations outside of Hollywood."

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