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About Town


OPINION, BUSINESS

Chatting with the Chair of the Venice Media District

Production and post-production growth in our community makes Venice a recognized area for 'the business,' as

By **Paul M. J. Suchecki** November 10, 2010

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Not long after moving to Venice, I started working at Marina del Rey's American Video Factory, a sound stage with multiple state-of-the-art post-production bays.

But, in the 1980s, getting media professionals to travel from Hollywood to work in our neighborhood was so difficult that AVF had to shut down.

In recent years there has been such growth of production and post-production activity, led by powerhouses like [Digital Domain](http://www.digitaldomain.com) (<http://www.digitaldomain.com>), that locals sought and obtained designation for Venice as a media district by the L.A. City Council .

I had a chat with Colleen O'Mara, chair of the Venice Media District, about what the designations means.

The VMD has a committee in the [Venice Chamber of Commerce](http://venice.patch.com/events/chamber-of-commerce-board-of-directors-meeting-5) (<http://venice.patch.com/events/chamber-of-commerce-board-of-directors-meeting-5>) geared to encouraging local participation in production and post-production of movies and television. The board is comprised of non-profit volunteers, with no membership dues for members, although O'Mara does urge participants to join the Venice Chamber.

"Recently, KCET tapped VMD for help in producing the Departures StoryShare Event at SPARC" (the Social and Public Art Resource Center), O'Mara said.

VMD also offers a paid internship program with local production companies through Venice Arts. "Participants found that these high school students were often better prepared than pros," she said.

O'Mara credits L.A. City Councilman Bill Rosendahl with coaxing the designation through the council in 2006. "With his background in television, he knew how significant it would be," O'Mara said.

In the new year, the VMD plans to expand the internship program to college students. Since so much employment in the media is based on whom people know, the VMD sponsors a regular series of networking events at The Brig on Abbot Kinney, called VMD Offline.

The group is currently looking for volunteers to help with its publicity, membership, events and sponsorship. Also pending for 2011 is a new website, so it's also looking for a volunteer webmaster.

It's great that those of us who work in production in Venice finally have a local organization for support and networking. If you're similarly employed and want to be listed in the local directory and subscribe to the VMD's free newsletter, contact the group at info@venicemediadistrict.org (<mailto:info@venicemediadistrict.org>)



Did you know Venice was a bona fide "Media District"? Do you think it was a good move for the community? [Tell us in the comments.](#)