

The Future of the Louisiana Wave Studio

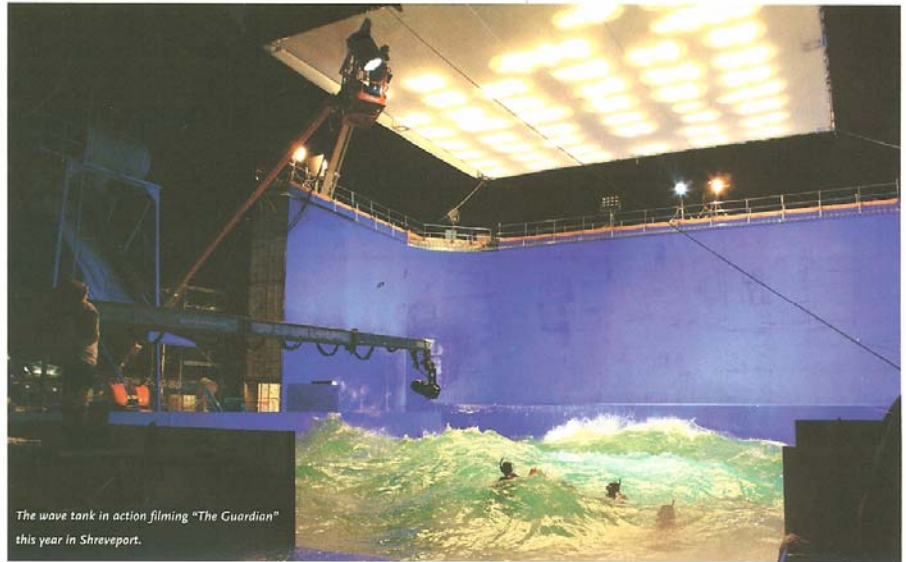
Throughout our past issues, we have brought you inside the production of Disney's Coast Guard action/drama, "The Guardian," which was shot in Shreveport and stars Kevin Costner and Ashton Kutcher. Now, with the film soon to be released on September 15th, we look forward to the future and see how Louisiana may benefit from what this production is leaving behind. The massive wave tank built for the film's unique special effects and water scenes is becoming the next big player in Louisiana's film infrastructure.

Aqua Tech of Flushing, New York, created the wave tank under the supervision of "The Guardian." After completion of the film, the 750,000-gallon tank was slated for demolition unless a buyer was found. In June 2006 the wave tank became part of Louisiana Wave Studio, LLC, which is owned and operated by Louisiana-born Dr. Ken Atchity, chairman of Atchity Entertainment International, Inc., and co-manager, Fred Griffin of Houston's Griffin Partners, Inc.

Atchity, whose producing credits include "Joe Somebody" and "The Madams Family," was planning to shoot a film about Katrina's impact on Charity Hospital. He was looking for a tank to recreate flooding when he came across the Shreveport tank and realized it was slated for removal. Backed by Griffin, a real estate developer and AEI investor, and Shreveport's Roger DeKay, they were able to secure the support of the Shreveport community, assume the liability from Disney's A School Productions, and acquire the land and tank from Sealy, the company that manages the industrial park.

"I'm thrilled to be able to make a contribution to the infrastructure of the booming Louisiana film industry," said Atchity.

The Louisiana Wave Studio is the only motion picture-dedicated facility with built-in, automatically-generated waves in the United States, located just six miles from downtown Shreveport. The Wave Studio required approximately 18 acres around the tank and leasing rights on an adjacent 51,000-square-foot warehouse to



The wave tank in action filming "The Guardian" this year in Shreveport.

accommodate future infrastructure expansion plans.

According to Griffin, the operation of the wave pool is just phase one. "We are exploring further development to complement what Northwest Louisiana filmmakers already have in place or in planning stages," he said.

The tank is 100 feet long, 80 feet wide and 8 feet deep, a total of 8,000 square feet, holding 750,000 gallons of water. The "wave factory" is capable of generating an endless variety of waves up to nine feet and horizontal storm conditions. On one side, drums, or "dump tanks," can be mounted 50 feet in the air atop wide chutes to pour water onto actors or set pieces such as ship decks. Three 150 horsepower fans and eight hidden

chambers are used to churn up waves of any type or configuration the director can imagine.

"The Guardian" used set pieces constructed to resemble cargo ships, fishing boats and even a giant water cave, and employed high cranes and film production equipment including lights, scaffolding and cameras.

"The wave pool is an invaluable asset to the film infrastructure of Shreveport-Bossier City," said Betty Jo LeBrun-Mooring, executive director of the Shreveport-Bossier Film Office. "We are thrilled that it will continue to be available for films to use, as it makes the area just that much more attractive to productions."

According to production designer Maher Ahmad, who

worked with Peter McGregor-Scott on the design and construction of the wave tank, "We're doing something here, your audience should know, that's really never been done before. There's never been a tank quite like this one."

Ahmad, a veteran production designer, has worked on many films with big-time water effects. He helped build tanks to submerge a plane's fuselage in a river for "U.S. Marshals" and sink a pirate ship in "Miss Congeniality 2." Although the Louisiana tank is smaller than the one created for "Titanic," it is five times larger than the one used to shoot effects for "The Perfect Storm."

For more information visit www.aeionline.com. ■



Ken Atchity, chairman of Atchity Entertainment International, Inc.



View from above as crew prepares to shoot a scene in "The Guardian."