

**Cover Story**



FRED HAYES/Disney Enterprises, Inc.

Vanessa Hudgens, Zac Efron, Ashley Tisdale and Jason Williams (from left) in "High School Musical 3."

# Franchise a windfall for Utah's economy

By **NANCY VAN VALKENBURG**

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**W**hen "High School Musical" selected Utah for its shoot, it seemed like the project was an average made-for-TV movie.

"It was just another Disney Channel original movie, like they've done since 1999," said Marshall Moore, director of the Utah Film Commission. "Nobody knew it would be so successful. They came to Utah with a regular budget, and hired a regular crew, maybe 70 crew people. They shot in 24 days, and when it aired, it took off."

Immediately, Disney ordered a sequel.

"Each consecutive film has hired more people and spent more money in the state," Moore said. "The first was about \$2.5 million. The second was about \$5 million. The third one, shot for theatrical release, spent about \$14 million."

Films for the cinema usually get bigger budgets, he said.

"You put more money into something you are putting on the big screen because you are more accountable for your work. Everything has to be bigger than life. Bigger, better, faster."

"High School Musical 3: Senior Year" hired more than 100 dancers, and used more than 7,000 Utah extras to appear in the background, Moore said.

"I can't say enough about what a movie like that does for your local economy and your local crew base, who rely on film work for their livelihood. And we've had 28 other films shoot in Utah this year, which is the highest number we have had in one year."

"High School Musical 4," to be a made-for-TV project, has committed to shoot in Utah as well. The film will have a new cast, led by new characters introduced in "High School Musical 3."

## 'HSM 3' glitters, setting stage for more to come

By **STEVE SALLES**

Standard-Examiner movie critic

**F**inally, Disney wised up and brought its hugely popular "High School Musical" franchise to the big screen.

And while I may have whined about having to see it months ago, this being my first foray into the "HSM" world, I was very much entertained, not only by what was on the screen, but by the reaction of its adoring fans.

Specifically, Alex and Reilly, two freshmen girls at Utah State University, were squirming and squealing with an enthusiasm usually reserved for Elvis, The Beatles or Johnny Depp.

If their frenetic seizures are any indication, this movie is going to make a lot of money. The kids of East High (not Utah, but New Mexico? Boo!) are finishing up their senior year, which means the big game, the big dance, college decisions and tearful goodbyes are all in their future.

Troy Bolton (Zac Efron) is struggling with the notion of attending his father/coach's alma mater, the University of Albuquerque (not a real school anymore), to play basketball on a scholarship. (Note: The U of

**UTAH CONNECTION:** Filmed at East and Murray high schools in Salt Lake City

### REVIEW

● **THE FILM:** 'High School Musical 3'

● **OUR RATING:** ★★★

● **STARRING:** Zac Efron, Vanessa Anne Hudgens, Ashley Tisdale, Lucas Grabeel, Corbin Bleu and Monique Coleman

● **BEHIND THE SCENES:** Directed by Kenny Ortega ('High School Musical' 1 & 2, 'Newsies'). Filmed in Salt Lake City.

● **PLAYING:** Syracuse 6, Layton Hills 9, Megaplex 13, Layton Tinseltown, Newgate Tinseltown, Walker 8. Runs 112 minutes.

● **MPAA RATING:** G



**VIDEO:** View trailer on StandardNet movie listings page

attending his father/coach's alma mater, the University of Albuquerque (not a real school anymore), to play basketball on a scholarship. (Note: The U of



If you want to see high school in a light I never thought possible.



If you think it sets kids up for a big letdown once they see what high school is really like.

A's coach is KUTV's Dave Fox.)

However, Troy is torn between his love for hoops, his love for theater and his love for Gabriella (Vanessa Anne Hudgens). She's already been accepted at Stanford University and may be leaving East High early as part of an elite freshman honors orientation program (basically introduced to heighten the drama).

Does this mean she won't be around for the prom or the big senior-year musical production? What is Troy going to do?

Well, you can probably guess. He'll pout while singing or throw a fit while dancing. Sharpay (tee hee, like the dog) (Ashley Tisdale) will be giddy to finally be rid of Gabriella so she can shine, while her sexually ambiguous twin brother Ryan (Lucas Grabeel) can work on all of his exciting choreography

and costuming. Yeah!

Chad Danforth (Corbin Bleu) seems to have a basketball glued to his hands, while his love interest Taylor (Monique Coleman) wants to run for President — yes, of the United States.

We're also introduced to the next generation of "High School Musical" players, including skater boy Jimmie (Matt Prokop) and Sharpay wannabe Tiara Gold (Jemma McKenzie-Brown).

All that's left is to say goodbye, which the "HSM" crew does with great affection and enthusiasm — which is why I think this will be the crowning achievement in the "High School Musical" franchise — and which is why they should quit while they're ahead, which, of course, they won't.

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