

Thompson exits Calgary post From Playback Magazine

by: **Sean Davidson**

Mar 9, 2007



Beth Thompson is stepping down from her position as Calgary Film Commissioner, ending seven years as a shepherd for the film and TV trade because, she says, the province and its industry is not doing enough to encourage business.

"There is a combination of things that made me decide," Thompson tells Playback Daily. "There is certainly a frustration that the industry hasn't changed a great deal since I started, and I think we need to take a stronger position."

She says changing the limits on the Alberta Film Development Fund -- currently at \$14 million per year and \$1.5 million per project -- would be a good start, as would tax incentives like those offered in other provinces.

Projects that shot in her city had a combined budget of \$110 million to \$130 million she says. "The numbers here haven't changed in six or seven years. We can see in other provinces there is considerable growth. We're in a market that should be doing really well.... but for some reason we're not."

Thompson notes that the region was unable to capitalize on the good press it drew following the success of *Brokeback Mountain*, which shot in southern Alberta in 2004.

"There was a huge peak in interest particularly when it was receiving all kinds of nominations," she recalls. "We had scripts coming out of our ears but I think, when they looked at the dollars and cents, this wasn't necessarily the best place."

Thompson says she will stay on until at least the end of March. A successor has not been named and there is "a chance" says Thompson that the position might be dissolved after her departure.