

'Magnum, P.I.' Calls Hawaii Home And The Islands Take It To Heart

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Honolulu.
To many residents of Hawaii, especially the economic planners, Universal's television series for CBS, "Magnum, P.I.," and its star, Tom Selleck, represent symbols closely identified with the Aloha State.

(Tee)
Not only is "Magnum," which leaves about half of the \$22,000,000 it spends annually in Hawaii, a boon to the local economy but it

also serves as a magnet to lure tourists to the nation's 50th state.

"Magnum," now in its sixth year, took over where "Hawaii Five-O" left off after 12 successive years of shooting in Hawaii, thus providing Hawaii with 18 years of a steady quasi-filmmaking industry.

With "Magnum's" future now uncertain because of its rating decline against NBC's "The Bill Cosby Show," Hawaiian economic

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planners are showing concern and making strong efforts to continue and expand the "industry" identification with filmmaking.

Other factors relating to "Magnum" also place its continuation on tenuous ground, perhaps overshadowing CBS' undetermined decision on its future. Selleck's seven-year deal winds after the 1986-87 season, a situation that may induce CBS to hold the fort at least for another year.

Production costs have increased, particularly the salaries of the regulars, a point that didn't matter when "Magnum" had the winning night.

Moreover, "Magnum" is in danger of losing the studio facilities it inherited from "Hawaii Five-O" in 1980.

The studio — soundstage, office bungalows and equipment and parking lot — is in the Diamond Head section on lease from the U. of Hawaii, said to want the property back for use as classrooms. The facilities go under the name of Universal City Studios.

The anticipated loss of what Hawaii regards as its only full-functioning studio is one reason the state's economic planners are talking about the possibility of building new studio facilities. A Universal effort to develop another "Magnum" bit the dust when the detective series "Hawaiian Heat" called it quits after 11 episodes.

"Magnum's" supervising producer for the past four years has been Charles Johnson, who calls attention to the unit's community involvement as well as the economic spilloff.

In addition to the four principal performers, "Magnum" imports about three to five actors a week from Los Angeles, according to Johnson. The rest are cast from "the growing acting talent pool here" for most featured roles.

About 30-40 of the crew from Los Angeles, including production personnel and actors, are in Hawaii on a per diem basis. In addition to the permanent staff from the mainland, on hand for shooting 22 episodes from August to March, are 70-80 local crewmen, bolstered by the extras required for each show.

Those from L.A. rent apartments or homes and a few, including Selleck, have bought homes in Hawaii. Some L.A. crew members have their families with them.

According to Johnson, the major equipment for filming "Magnum" has been brought in from the mainland, including a cinemobile and catering truck, but the unit's needs are shored up to a great deal by local suppliers who provide trucks, generators and lighting equipment.

Chris Abbott-Fish stays on as the resident producer-writer and there are five staff writers, also producers, who work out of Universal Studios on the mainland. They come out for certain shows, but not as often as before the installation of

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computer facilities hooked up with the studio for the transmission of scripts.

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Hawaii may be "Magnum's" home, but there's a "certain appeal and diversity" if you go somewhere else once in a while, says Johnson. "Magnum," for example, went to London for a segment and Johnson has taken a look at Hong Kong for an upcoming sequence.