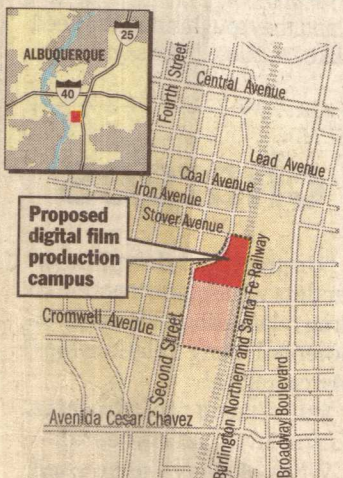


Four views of buildings once used by the Santa Fe Railway that are proposed to be part of a film production complex south of Downtown Albuquerque. Craig Fritz/Tribune

Rail yard rebirth



Charlotte Hill/Tribune

A film production complex is just one of the redevelopment plans for the site housing old Santa Fe Railway shops south of Downtown. But a lawsuit presents a potential stumbling block.

By Ed Asher

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The shops at the old Santa Fe rail yards are merely shells now, but in their day they were architectural marvels.

They marked the transformation of Albuquerque from a farming town to a burgeoning metropolis, by the standards of the early 20th century.

From the Roaring '20s through the end of World War II, they were a beehive of activity in the midst of the Barelás neighborhood.

The machine shops and boiler shops, which once serviced steam locomotives, were abandoned decades ago. But the aura of Hollywood is descending on Albuquerque's ghost town.

Plans for redevelopment of the yards have been in the works for years, hampered by a series of legal squabbles.

Now comes a Hollywood movie producer who is teaming with local developers to convert a handful of the old buildings into what he calls a digital film production "campus."

Elliott Lewitt has produced a number of films, most recently "Around the Bend," shot in the Albuquerque area.