

Tyler Perry, fearful of AI advances, halts \$800 million Atlanta film studio expansion

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Tyler Perry has put the kibosh on a planned \$800 million expansion at his 330-acre studio in Atlanta over fears that rapid advances in video-related artificial intelligence could reduce demand for traditional film-making.

Recently, OpenAI unveiled its new text-to-video model Sora with sample

AI-generated videos that impressed and alarmed many observers.

"Being told that it can do all of these things is one thing, but actually seeing the capabilities, it was mind-blowing," Perry said in an extensive interview with The Hollywood Reporter. He said filmmakers may not need to do location shoots or even build out certain sets if the technology keeps improving.

Perry's apparent pullback is notable because the prolific filmmaker not only shoots his own projects at Tyler Perry Studios at the former Fort McPherson, one of the largest filming campuses in the country, but he also reaps substantial revenue renting soundstages and backlot operations to other major studios.

In a text through his spokesman, Perry confirmed to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that his concerns about AI have caused him to hold off on more soundstages and backlot set pieces.

"It makes me worry so much about all of the people in the business," Perry told The Hollywood Reporter. "Because as I was looking at it, I immediately started thinking of everyone in the industry who would be affected by this, including actors and grip and electric and transportation and sound and editors, and looking at this, I'm thinking this will touch every corner of our industry."

He said he feels bad that he won't be hiring [construction workers](#) for his now nixed expansion "because there is no need to do it."

Perry told the news outlet he feels the entertainment business has to "galvanize" as "one voice, not only in Hollywood and in this industry but also in Congress."

"There's got to be some sort of regulations in order to protect us," he

added. "If not, I just don't see how we survive."

Though Perry is raising an alarm about the technology, he told the publication he has already used artificial intelligence technology to "age" his own face in two upcoming films instead of going through hours of makeup.

In 2019, Perry opened his current version of Tyler Perry Studios on former Fort McPherson property he purchased in 2015 for \$30 million. He created 12 soundstages and a backlot that includes a chapel, a jail, a lakeside cabin, a prison yard, a bank, a diner and a replica of the White House.

He originally planned to add more soundstages in 2022 but told the AJC at the time that held off because of supply-chain issues and the resulting inflation.

Perry and other producers are facing a shifting entertainment world where [media companies](#) are spending less across the board on film and TV productions and struggling to make streaming services profitable.

At the same time, investors have spent billions to build more [studio](#) square footage in Georgia with several new studios opening the past year: Doraville's Assembly Studios, Forest Park's BlueStar Studios, Douglasville's Lionsgate Studios, Athens' Athena Studios and Atlanta's Electric Owl Studios. Trilith Studios in Fayetteville, Eagle Rock Studios in Norcross, EUE Screen Gems in Atlanta and Three Ring Studios in Covington have also expanded in recent years.

Georgia now has more soundstage space than New York and has the second most space in the United States only behind California.

The boom in TV and film production in the state stems from generous

tax credits to production companies passed by the state in 2008. A state House bill that is currently being considered would make the tax credit system more complicated and potentially less enticing to everyone from independent filmmakers to Disney and Netflix.

Perry has also talked publicly about creating a public-facing entertainment district on 28 acres adjoining Tyler Perry Studios, featuring retail, restaurants, a theater and a museum. But he has never announced a specific date to begin construction and it remains a future project.

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