



HiT entertainment

**For Immediate Release**

## **HIT ENTERTAINMENT EXPANDS WITH LAUNCH OF MOVIE DIVISION, *HIT MOVIES***

**Los Angeles-Based Division to Develop Family Features As Well As Films Based on Iconic HIT Characters, Including *Thomas the Tank Engine™*, *Barney™*, *Bob the Builder™* and *Angelina Ballerina™***

**Nickelodeon Films' Veteran Julia Pistor Tapped to Lead *HIT Movies***

**HIT Entertainment Brings on Strategic Partner United Talent Agency to Broaden Opportunities**

**New York, NY -- Los Angeles, CA – March 4, 2009** -- HIT Entertainment, one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights owners, today announced the launch of HIT Movies, a new division dedicated to making family-oriented movies out of HIT's library of iconic children's properties, as well as identifying and developing new stories and characters for future HIT family movies. The launch is part of a far-ranging effort by the company to expand the reach of renowned HIT Entertainment properties across a variety of entertainment platforms, and use films as a means to introduce new HIT stories and characters to a family audience.

To head HIT's Los Angeles office and film division, HIT Entertainment President and CEO Jeff Dunn has tapped long time industry veteran Julia Pistor to run HIT Movies. Most recently, Pistor served as Nickelodeon's EVP of Movies, where she developed and produced a total of 16 movies that grossed more than \$1.5 billion combined at the box office.

The new film division will initially focus on developing family film franchises based on HIT's leading properties, such as *Thomas & Friends™*, *Barney™*, *Bob the Builder™*, *Angelina Ballerina™* and *Rainbow Magic™*. These features will expand on the essence of these world-renowned HIT brands, and will target a broad family audience.

As part of the expansion, HIT Entertainment has signed with leading Beverly Hills-based talent and literary agency United Talent Agency to help create new opportunities in film, television and digital entertainment. UTA will also assist in establishing new brand extensions and corporate partnerships for HIT Entertainment



properties which have achieved phenomenal success worldwide in toys, books, television, home entertainment and live events. Additionally, UTA will work closely with *HIT Movies'* Julia Pistor to ramp up its feature film development slate.

"Julia brings to HIT a wonderful sensibility for family entertainment. She understands how to translate some of the world's best-loved children's properties into family events for the big screen, creating rich stories that are entertaining to both kids and parents alike. She's smart, creative, easy to work with and a wonderful human being," said Jeff Dunn, President & CEO, HIT Entertainment. "Just as HIT Entertainment is synonymous with trusted, high quality entertainment for children, *HIT Movies* – under Julia's direction and with the vast and impressive talents of UTA -- will help expand the world of HIT Entertainment and build properties and franchises that resonate with parent and kids worldwide."

Pistor added, "I am delighted to help launch new family movie franchises, based off of HIT characters and worlds. At the heart of all of HIT's properties is rich storytelling, and in the case of *Thomas*, *Angelina* and *Rainbow Magic*, a robust publishing history. Using this strong storytelling tradition, mixed with the positive values and timeless lessons that each character stands for, *HIT Movies* will expand the essence of these properties and build on their long term franchises. Millions of people around the world have grown up watching *Thomas* and *Bob* on TV, playing with the toys or reading the books. These characters are part of the fabric of childhood. More than simply creating long episodes of the TV shows, I see this as an opportunity to build on the existing creative sensibilities of these powerhouse brands and translate them for the big screen."

This will be the second pairing of Dunn and Pistor. Previously Pistor ran the movie division for Dunn when he was Nickelodeon's President of Film and Enterprises. Pistor's feature resume includes both animation (*Rugrats: The Movie*, *SpongeBob Squarepants*, *The Wild Thornberries* and *Barnyard*) and live action (*Lemony Snicket's Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Nacho Libre*, *Good Burger* and *Snow Day*).

In seeking to broaden opportunities in film, television and other media, HIT Entertainment has for the first time engaged the strategic services of a major Hollywood talent agency to provide greater access to the entertainment, media and creative communities.

"We believe that *HIT Movies*, under Jeff and Julia's leadership, is poised to be a major force in the growing family film genre," said Jeremy Zimmer, co-founder and Board member of United Talent Agency. "*Thomas*, *Barney*, *Bob* and *Angelina* are among the biggest stars in family entertainment and we're thrilled to be onboard to create new opportunities in media and entertainment for these iconic characters, and to help HIT build even greater audiences worldwide."

### **About HIT Entertainment**

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes properties, such as *Barney*<sup>™</sup>, *Bob the Builder*<sup>™</sup>, *Thomas & Friends*<sup>™</sup>, *Pingu*<sup>™</sup>, *Fireman Sam*<sup>™</sup>, *Angelina Ballerina*<sup>™</sup> and *Rainbow Magic*<sup>™</sup>. HIT represents Chapman Entertainment's *Fifi and the Flowertots*<sup>™</sup> and *Roary the Racing Car*<sup>™</sup> in North America and Japan, as well as *Wallace & Gromit*<sup>™</sup>, *Shaun the Sheep*<sup>™</sup>, *Timmy Time*<sup>™</sup> and Aardman Classics from Aardman Animations. HIT also acts as a worldwide representative for The Jim Henson Company's library of classic family brands and as representative for *The Wiggles*<sup>®</sup> in the UK. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production, content distribution, publishing, consumer products licensing and live events and has operations in the UK, US, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. HIT is a part-owner of US-based preschool channel, PBS KIDS Sprout<sup>SM</sup>, and international preschool channel JimJam, (outside of the US, UK and China). For more information, visit [www.hitentertainment.com](http://www.hitentertainment.com).

**United Talent Agency** is one of the entertainment industry's premier talent and literary agencies, representing many of world's most widely-known figures in every current and emerging area of entertainment, including motion pictures, television, books, music, digital media and live entertainment. Collectively, UTA agents represent a significant cross-section of today's most acclaimed artists and entertainers, including winners and nominees of Academy, Emmy, Grammy, Screen Actors Guild, Directors Guild, Writers Guild, Producers Guild, Golden Globe, People's Choice and Webby awards. The agency is also globally recognized in the areas of film finance, film packaging, corporate consulting, branding &

licensing, endorsements and the representation of production talent. UTA also operates New York-based United Entertainment Group, a joint venture firm focusing on branded entertainment strategies for Fortune 100 companies.

To download artwork, please visit [www.hitnewsonline.com](http://www.hitnewsonline.com).

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