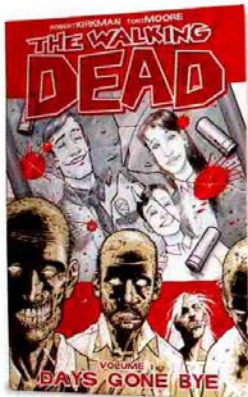


ZOMBIES 'DEAD' AHEAD FOR AMC

Off to see the lizard



By CYNTHIA LITTLETON

AMC has given a series greenlight to "The Walking Dead," the Frank Darabont-helmed adaptation of the Image Comics series by Robert Kirkman.

AMC prexy and g.m. Charlie Collier noted that "Dead" marks AMC's first foray into full ownership of one of its series.

AMC has ordered six episodes of the series that revolves around a group of survivors of a zombie apocalypse. Darabont penned and will direct the first episode. He'll exec produce with Kirkman, Gale Anne Hurd of Valhalla Motion Pictures and David Alpert of Circle of Confusion. Series will be funded entirely inhouse by AMC parent Rainbow Media. Charles Eglee, a seasoned TV drama showrunner, has also boarded the project as an exec producer.

"With Frank and Gale and their entire team invested in this project, we also wanted to be fully invested in this project," Collier said.

"Dead" is set to begin production in June in Atlanta. It's targeted

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By DAVE McNARY

Durable special effects juggernaut "Godzilla" will return to the bigscreen in 2012, with Legendary Pictures producing.

Legendary will co-produce with Warner Bros., which is co-financing.

The "Godzilla" project's been something of an open secret in recent months after Legendary execs began talking with potential directors. Legendary held off on making a public announcement until it closed its rights deal with Japan's Toho Co., which has overseen more than 25 "Godzilla" films.

Legendary said it's planning to announce a director shortly, and indicated that its "Godzilla" will



Big with the kids
Nickelodeon logs a big night with the Kids' Choice Awards.
Page 4

To the Matt

Friends let loose at Matt Damon's American Cinematheque tribute.
Page 12



Ben Affleck and Matt Damon

screen holidays, the 3D phenomenon is challenging that assumption. An even number of multiplexes... drop substantially on Friday.

Those fears sealed on Wall Street where shares of Animation SKG... But exhibs don't concerned.
According to... which latched million, will retain

Creative for WBTV

By MICHAEL SCHNEIDER

It's a big developmental-serving Warner exec: Susan Rovner promoted to exec veep meat for Warner Bros. She'll be one of prexy top lieutenants.

Rovner will oversee creation of primetime broadcast networks on comedy and drama teams.

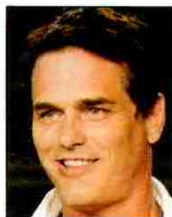
Rovner, who had prior VP of drama at Warner Bros. TV, succeeds Leonard Gold

DEAD

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for an October bow, dovetailing with Halloween and AMC's annual "Fearfest" two-week marathon of horror and thriller pics.

The series revolves around police officer Rick Grimes, who leads a group of human survivors on a search for a safe home in a world overrun by zombies. Jon Bernthal ("The Pacific") has been cast in the role of Shane, who is Grimes' partner.



Bernthal

AMC greenlighted production of a "Walking Dead" pilot back in January but ultimately decided to go straight to series after hearing Darabont's vision for a six-episode arc, and because of the desire to tie in with "Fearfest."

"He's taken the baseline road map of the underlying material and just blew it out to the next level," said Joel Stillerman, AMC's senior veep of programming, production and digital content. "There's stuff in there that will make the people who love the comics very happy and some surprises in there as well."

Stillerman added that the property is likely to have "huge international value."