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'Godzilla' stomps back to screen

Legendary Pictures gets rights to iconic monster

By DAVE MCNARY

"Godzilla" is coming back -- this time, with Legendary Pictures taking the lead, co-producing and co-financing with Warner Bros. for release in 2012.

Legendary announced Monday it had obtained rights to the iconic monster character from Japan's Toho Co., which has overseen more than 25 "Godzilla" films. Toho will release the pic in Japan.

Legendary said it's planning to announce a director shortly.

In addition to Legendary, producers on the new film will be Dan Lin, Roy Lee and Brian Rogers. Yoshimitsu Banno, Kenji Okuhira and Doug Davison will exec produce.

"Godzilla is one of the world's most powerful pop culture icons, and we at Legendary are thrilled to be able to create a modern epic based on this long-loved Toho franchise," said Thomas Tull, Chairman and CEO of Legendary. "Our plans are to produce the Godzilla that we, as fans, would want to see. We intend to do justice to those essential elements that have allowed this character to remain as pop-culturally relevant for as long as it has."

Legendary noted the film will fall under its co-production and co-financing deal with Warner Bros. Legendary's productions with Warners have included "The Dark Knight," "300" and "The Hangover."

Speculation about a new "Godzilla" has been active since last summer. The Bloody Disgusting web site reported in August that the project was in development.