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LAURA GOSS/Emerald
The band Ballet Sangamar plays African rhythms in the EMU Amphitheater for International Week on Monday. The band leader, Aliou Diouf (center), is from Senegal.

Titanic's success keeps city afloat

A city in Mexico was hit by Titanic-mania when one of the movie's scenes was filmed there

By Michelle Kiodin
The Associated Press

ROSARITO, Mexico — Undeveloped beaches, scenic surf and succulent lobster once defined this popular tourist spot in Baja California.

That was before the Titanic docked here.

Now, there are Titanic burgers, Titanic seafood and a Titanic glass and screen shop with faux port-

holes on its storefront. And don't forget the "Titanic" museum.

James Cameron, the writer-director of Hollywood's most expensive film, searched worldwide for the perfect location to sink his 775-foot model of the ill-fated ship that sunk 86 years ago on Tuesday.

He chose Rosarito, about 50 miles south of San Diego, because of its uncluttered view of the Pacific Ocean. Now the 80,000 residents of this poor, coastal town hope the Titanic will be their ship of fame and fortune, attracting future films and tourists.

"In the future, 'Titanic' will mean more confidence to invest,

if [20th Century] Fox invested and filmed a great movie like this one," said Mayor Hugo Torres Chabert, who wants to diversify his town's summer economy and lessen its reliance on surfers, day-trippers and retirees.

The set was constructed on 40 acres of seaside land three miles south of Rosarito's hotel-restaurant strip. A good portion of space was dedicated to a 17 million-gallon pool, which remains for future films.

While shooting for over six months in 1996 and 1997, the production pumped more than \$15 million into the economy, Rosarito officials estimate.

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