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Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

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Coen Brothers movie shoot concludes in Scottsbluff area



COURTESY PHOTO

"The Gal Who Got Rattled" Producers scouting locations in western Nebraska.

The Nebraska Film office and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development are excited to announce the conclusion of the recent filming in western Nebraska. The Coen Brothers and Pan Shot Productions have completed a 50 day shoot with the last two and a half weeks in the Scottsbluff area. The resulting project will be released sometime next year on Netflix.

Pan Shot Productions and Annapurna Television, a division of Annapurna Pictures, began production on "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs," in New Mexico in mid-July and ended in the Scottsbluff area September 27 with filming just west of Scottsbluff on the North Platte River. Other locations in the area included the FX and the Hughson Ranches in Sioux County. A 19th century period piece, the scenes called for rolling hills, isolated look, and few trees.

"The Ballad of Buster Scruggs" is a feature-length omnibus consisting of six separate stories, all Westerns. The longest segment, entitled "The Gal Who Got Rattled" was filmed entirely on location in Nebraska and follows two wagon bosses on the Oregon Trail and a woman who needs the help of one of them and who might be a marriage prospect for the other.

This area has not seen a period film production since 1979 when the CBS TV episodic series, "The Chisholms" starring Robert Preston and Rosemary Harris filmed on location in and around Bayard and Chimney Rock. A decade before the Chisholms, George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola's "The Rain People," with Robert Duval, James Caan and Shirley Knight filmed this contemporary feature in the Ogallala and Brule areas in 1969. "This will be the first production to really showcase the open prairie and Oregon Trail terrain from a well-known team of directors and producers," said Laurie Richards, Nebraska Film Officer. "Nebraska's landscape has a prominent role in the filming."

The economic impact of the project while filming in Nebraska will be substantial. For three weeks, 250 motel rooms were booked in the Scottsbluff area. Many local businesses were called upon to provide their services during this time. Road grading, fence moving, gravel hauling, port-a-johns, restaurant services, coffee houses, crew clothing, rental cars, petroleum, horse and oxen boarding, antique stores, hardware, activity at the regional airport, were but a few of the local commercial retail and service providers to see a substantial increase in sales during the pre-production and filming stages.

Many of these businesses will also be busy during the post-production phases and see additional income gen-

erated from the activity. With the completion of filming, the producers will be able to provide an accurate amount of expenses while in western Nebraska and the city of Scottsbluff will have sales receipts for September sometime in November. "We are really looking forward to learning what was actually left here in retail expenses," said Starr Lehl, Economic Development Director for Scottsbluff. "We think we will all be pleasantly surprised."

The production "crewed up" out of the Santa Fe area and moved as an army to all the various states and locations. Several Nebraska-based production assistants, drivers, wranglers and security guards were added to this core crew in Scottsbluff.

A casting call was held at the Midwest Theatre in Scottsbluff where over 700 "ordinary" looking people were given the chance to find stardom as an extra. Forty people were hired from that group as extras to complement the "wagon train" heading westward across the prairie. Horses, dogs, chickens, pigs and a variety of animals also participated in the journey. The producers and directors were in awe of the landscape most of all. The additional treat was the Nebraska hospitality they came to love. "Everyone here is so nice," was heard over and over again.

Few if any of the production team had ever spent significant time in Nebraska. The project was an opportunity to spread the word that we are open to the film industry. Producers, directors, their families, from all over the country - New York, Los Angeles, Santa Fe and many other cities - found western Nebraska to be a treasure. "This was a great opportunity to showcase the beauty of our state," said Laurie Richards. "We are fortunate they wanted to film here and we knew just where this would all work out, the Oregon Trail in western Nebraska! It was a very good fit. We took the location manager to North Platte, Ogallala and Bayard areas. He loved what he saw, but wanted to see more. Additional scouting of the area north of Scottsbluff sealed the deal," said Richards.

The Coen Brothers not only received the Keys to the City of Scottsbluff, they also received recognition from the Governor as Admirals in the Nebraska Navy. "Walking on the windy prairie was like bobbing on the ocean and as easily disorienting," said one producer.

"They were overwhelmed with it all and hope to come back someday. We encouraged them to consider opening a "western office" in Scottsbluff," said Richards. "The Coens just smiled - both of them!"

Western Nebraska Bank Donates \$2,000 To Thedford Rural Fire District



COURTESY PHOTO

Reed Larsen (left), AVP at Western Nebraska Bank, presents Mike Finney, President of the Thedford Rural Fire District Board with a check for \$2,000.

Western Nebraska Bank recently donated \$2,000 towards the development of the new Thedford Fire Hall for the volunteer Thedford Fire Department.

"The new building has seven bays, fire trucks parked in four of them, the ambulances occupy two more and the last one is a service bay. The original fire station in Thedford was built in the 1960's and there was minimal space inside the

building to operate," said David Hamilton Secretary/Treasurer of the board.

"Western Nebraska Bank has locations in Purdum, North Platte, Curtis and Paxton, and we know and understand what it takes for a small community to thrive. Local volunteer fire departments are essential in these small ag-based towns and are integral in saving lives, ranches, homes and live-

stock. We are very appreciative of our local volunteers," says Michael Kelly, Western Nebraska Bank Chairman and CEO.

Western Nebraska Bank is a community and agriculture focused bank with emphasis on local decision making. We understand the opportunities and challenges that are unique to our Western Nebraska customers who are in agriculture and business.

Local Historical Marker Top 15 Finalist In Summer Photo Contest



WAYNE HATHAWAY PHOTO

The Haumann Sisters Historical marker on the Courthouse Square in Thedford is one of 15 finalists in the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Summer Photo Contest. The photo was taken by former Stapleton resident, Wayne Hathaway, now of Sterling, Nebraska.

The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation (NSHSF) announced the top 15 photo finalists for the Summer Photo Contest. The summer photo contest was created to raise awareness about the Nebraska Marker Project, an NSHSF initiative to help raise funds to repair, repair and replace historical markers in need of maintenance.

More than 170 online submissions were received during June, July and August. The top 15 photos are posted to the NSHSF's Facebook page for a public vote. The three photos that receive the most engagement (likes, reactions, comments, shares) through October 5 will receive recognition and awards during the Nebraska State Historical Society annual meeting in October.

The contest encouraged professional and amateur photographers to share each marker's unique environment through photography. "Each marker

not only has its own history, but also its own picturesque landscape to appreciate and capture," said Leslie Fattig, NSHSF Executive Director.

The top 15 photos were captured by the following Nebraskan photographers:

- Wayne Hathaway - Sterling, Nebraska (2 Photos)
- Jamie Connell - Gering, Nebraska
- Jeff Barnes - Omaha, Nebraska (3 Photos)
- Paul Leeper - Grand Island, Nebraska
- James Frohman - Lincoln, Nebraska
- Vern Greunke - Cedar Bluffs, Nebraska (5 Photos)
- Ryan Krenk - Pleasant Dale, Nebraska
- Colleen Childers - Grand Island, Nebraska
- Gretchen Garrison - Lincoln, Nebraska
- Troy Barker - Auburn, Nebraska

The top 15 photos were selected by a committee of art and history representatives through a blind

identification selection process. Committee members included Bob Puschendorf, Dee Adams, Margaret Berry, Glenna Berry-Horton, Trixie Schmidt and Leslie Fattig.

Final results will be announced at the Nebraska State Historical Society Annual Meeting, Thursday, October 12.

The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation supports the preservation, interpretation, and appreciation of Nebraska history. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the NSHSF works directly with donors on their funding priorities in support of countless Nebraska State Historical Society programs, projects, and events.

You may view the winning photos online at: Project Website: <http://nshsf.org/the-nebraska-marker-project/> NSHSF Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaStateHistoricalSocietyFoundation/>

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