

Marlborough Ready For Its Close-up?

Some think so

By Diane Church
Staff Writer

MARLBOROUGH – Rural charm, historic buildings, a lake and proximity to Hartford are among the reasons many residents moved to this small town.

These traits could also draw filmmakers here. At least, that's the hope of Jane Boston of the economic development commission.

“We hope the opportunity comes up for Marlborough to make it to the big screen – or the little screen,” said Boston. “It would create a little buzz and excitement.”

Boston is spearheading the EDC's effort to bring Hollywood stars to town. She feels the state is now very attractive to film producers since last year, when the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism announced a 30 percent tax credit for any digital media or motion picture project that spends at least \$50,000 in the state. Connecticut's proximity to New York helps, too. Over the years, a number of major films were made at least partially in the state, including 13 so far this year. The most famous this year was the latest “Indian Jones” flick, when downtown New Haven was made over to look like a city of the 1940s. Several other lower-profile flicks have also used the state this year, including “Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2,” a horror film called “Camp Hope” and “The Bronx is Burning,” which is about political tension during a world series in the 1970s. Most of these films feature famous celebrities, from America Ferrera to Robert DiNiro.

Reality television has also found the state attractive. This year, “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” built a home for a deserving family. And some time within the past year “Fat March,” about a group of overweight people who walk from Boston, Mass. to Washington, D.C., quietly had its first weigh-in at Gillette Castle in East Haddam and filmed scenes in Willimantic and Fairfield County.

Recent casting calls in the state included a bank commercial shot in Wallingford that needed teens last month. Earlier this year, there were auditions for the game show “Power of 10” which debuted this summer. Drawing more films and commercials to the state could translate into extra cash for residents who could be cast as extras, Boston said. To market the town, the EDC has made a postcard with four scenes: Marlborough Tavern, the shores of Lake Terramuggus, The Marlborough Country

Barn in winter and an aerial shot of Marlborough Congregational Church in autumn, surrounded by trees. Boston mentioned these attributes, plus the scenic Blackledge River and the fly-in residential community of the Salmon River Airfield Association, in letters to film producers. Recently she sent a letter to the producers of “Confessions of a Shopaholic,” based on Sophie Kinsella’s novel. More recent pictures of the town can be seen at the CCCT’s website, www.cultureandtourism.org Boston hopes that any films using Marlborough are tasteful.

“We want something like ‘Mystic Pizza,’ not ‘Amityville Horror,’” she said, mentioning two films that prominently featured the Connecticut communities in the titles.

First Selectman Bill Black would welcome filmmakers to town. He feels the town’s overall rural feel and history make it especially desirable for those making a movie about the past.

“It’s a typical New England town,” he said. “We have historic churches, homes and businesses.”

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