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Hollywood Looks to Edwardsville for Scene in Tim Robbins' Film

Even if it's only for a day, Hollywood movie producers want to use downtown Edwardsville on Wednesday for a scene in an upcoming movie.

Producers of "The Return" would like to shoot a few scenes using Main Street and Mojo's Music, a local music business, Mayor Gary Niebur said.

The film portrays three veterans returning from the war in Iraq. They are trying to adjust to civilian life and deal with the trauma of their experiences and find themselves on a cross-country trip, according to an Internet movie site.

Actors Tim Robbins, Rachel McAdams and Michael Pena will star in the film that is set to be released next fall. City officials said at least one of the stars is expected to appear in town.

"We're crossing the river for a few scenes. It's a quick shot in the arm without a lot of impact," said

Adam Merims, the producer with Return Productions Inc. of Los Angeles. "We think it's going to be a good fit for the movie. The Main Street where we're going to be has a lot of character."

The movie crew has been in St. Louis for the last two weeks and in Chicago three weeks before that, Merims said.

City officials in Edwardsville were notified this week about the request from the production company. Robbins' publicist could not be reached for comment.

"Over the last several days, we have learned in more detail the scope of the project and the impact on downtown," Niebur said. "We understand that timing for their schedule is critical. It still has to follow the formal process for street closures."

A special meeting of the Recreation, Arts and Special Events Board was called for 9 a.m. Saturday at City Hall to discuss the requests and possibly forward it to the Edwardsville City Council for its approval Tuesday.

While filming is not expected to take more than a day, the production company has requested the closure of Main Street from Vandalia Street to Hillsboro Street, along with the closure of Vandalia Street to Buchanan Street and St. Louis Street to Randle Street. Parking also would be affected because the request includes the use of a portion of the parking lot behind Mojo's Music. The production company also requests pedestrian traffic be shut off to the area during filming.

Since Main and Vandalia streets are state highways, Niebur said the production company also will need permission from Illinois Department of Transportation for the street closure.

The Edwardsville Police Department has had preliminary discussions with representatives from the company about safety.

Bob Moggio, owner of Mojo's Music at 142 N. Main St., said Liz Goldsmith, the location manager with the company, came into his store Tuesday, explaining they wanted to shoot a scene of the movie in his store.

"She explained what they were doing and that they wanted a scene in a music store near a town square," Moggio said. "They were looking for some place with more of an old school feel."

While the store will be rearranged for the scene, Moggio said, "it is kind of exciting in a way."

"It's a possible chance for publicity for the store," Moggio said. "If everything goes right, they said they should be out of here by the afternoon."

If the city approves the production company's request, the scene will be shot in Edwardsville, but the movie will actually be set in Denver.

"It will probably be a blip on the screen," City Alderwoman Janet Haroian said. "But for the 15 seconds of fame, the kind of establishment they picked, the music store and our downtown, it's a prime location."