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Christmas movie crew wrapping up in Dahlonega

Mountain town transformed for Hallmark holiday movie

By Hailey Van Parys

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POSTED: October 13, 2016 10:23 a.m.



Erin O. Smith/The Times

Moses McKinzey, a special effects technician, textures material to look like snow Wednesday as the crew prepares to film a scene of "Shooting Christmas" in downtown Dahlonega. Crews have been filming scenes from the Hallmark channel movie for about two weeks.

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Moses McKinzey texturized fake snow around an ice skating rink in Dahlonega's Hancock Park on Wednesday night as a film crew of about 150 continued work on a Hallmark Channel movie.

McKinzey, who grew up in Dahlonega, is working as a production assistant on "Shooting Christmas," which will wrap up filming Oct. 14, just in time for the mountain town's annual Gold Rush fall festival.

"(The snow) looks so real on camera, you would think they filmed it up North," McKinzey said.

Icicle lights and fake snowball mounds were also set up.

The film follows a Los Angeles actress character as she films a Christmas movie. The town seems to be losing its Christmas traditions, and the main character is too busy working to keep up Christmas traditions, either.

The character stays at the fictional Homestead Lodge, which the mayor of the town owns, and a romance begins.

Sam Norton, owner of the Picnic Cafe in the square, said he didn't mind the filming.

"It's been fascinating," Norton said. "It's a fun, unique opportunity."

Two women, Sam Echols and Alex Baxter, saw some filming last week.

"We got lemon bars (from Picnic Cafe) and watched them film," Baxter said.

Norton has seen several scenes film outside his doors in the past two weeks since the crew came to town.

"They were making snow for it," Norton said. More than 300 extras were used in the film.

The inside of the Fudge Factory was transformed into a bakery in the early hours of Oct. 3.

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"It's been an overall good experience," general manager Jane O'Gorman said. "It's been exciting."

The crew also filmed some indoor scenes near the women's center, which served as a Town Hall.

Ashley Bruce, locations manager for the film, sold real estate in Dhalonega before pursuing film. Knowing the area and the people who live in it made it easier to do her job, but setting up for the film wasn't without its struggles.

"It may seem like a big set, but it's really not," Bruce said.

"There aren't as many detours as there are in big cities. You have to think about everyone who lives here, trying to get to work and school," Bruce said.

The movie will air on the Hallmark channel sometime in mid-November.



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