

THE ROAD TO PRODUCTION



MICHAEL SMART / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Downtown West Dundee serves as a movie set during filming Monday of *The Road to Perdition*, a major motion picture starring Tom Hanks. Work on filming of the movie, a Depression-era gangster flick, got into full swing Monday. West Dundee was chosen for some scenes because downtown buildings resemble 1930s Rock Island, a setting for the movie.

Hollywood hits West Dundee

Crowds turn out to watch 'The Road to Perdition' filming

By Geneva White and Peter Denk
STAFF WRITERS

WEST DUNDEE — If Tom Hanks needs to satisfy his sweet tooth today, one downtown business owner is ready to accommodate him.

"We are so trying to get him to come into the candy store," said Kim Srajer, owner of Around the Corner Candy, 107 S. Second St. "Somebody saw him on *Oprah*, and he said he likes candy."

Srajer admitted her affection for the Oscar-winning actor Monday as she waited on hordes of customers who traveled to downtown West Dundee to watch the filming of the Sam Mendes movie *The Road to Perdition*, a Depression-era gangster flick starring Hanks.

"We've got him everywhere," Srajer said as she pointed to a poster from the movie *Cast Away* hanging on the wall.

Although Illinois 72 has been closed to traffic since Sunday night, the road closure didn't stop onlookers from flocking downtown in Monday's rain to see the filming, which involved shots of pedestrians

and period cars moving up and down a snow-covered street.

Amanda Brand, unit publicist for DreamWorks, which is producing the movie, said initially there were concerns about how rain would affect the fake snow, which is made of paper. But the light drizzle and gray skies worked well for the filming, Brand said.

"It's supposed to be a cold and wintry scene, so this is actually perfect," Brand said. "And the snow held up."

Set comes alive

For the past two weeks, crews from DreamWorks have been putting together a movie set in downtown West Dundee to make it look like 1930s Rock Island, where the story is based. Hundreds of onlookers stood behind barricades to watch the set come alive.

"I grew up in Dundee, so it's neat to see how they're making (the movie)," said Kathy Schmitt of Lake in the Hills. "It's exciting. Little ol' Dundee is on the map."

Al Ziros of South Elgin said he was glad the rain gave him a break from his construction work so he could watch a

motion picture being filmed.

"It's interesting," Ziros said. "It's something that doesn't happen every day."

Ziros was not the only one who was enjoying some time off work to watch West Dundee make it to the big screen.

"I've never seen a filming," said Julie Verwijst of Spring Grove.

Verwijst works in Elgin but played hooky for the day Monday. She said she hopes to see Hanks today when he enters Cardinal Office Supply, 118 W. Main St., which has been made over to look like a bank.

Business owners and village officials said Monday's filming, which began early in morning and continued into the late afternoon, was going as expected.

"There are a lot of people interested, and they'll come to town," said Timothy Burns, owner of Emmett's Tavern & Brewing Co. as he watched extras and movie crews bustle around downtown. "It just exceeds everything we anticipated. The benefits are still to come."

◆ Turn to **HOLLYWOOD, A4**

Complaints of traffic snarls

While downtown business owners were happy with the added traffic, motorists sat through lengthy delays on Illinois 31 and other nearby roads. In Carpentersville, police received a steady stream of complaints about the snarled traffic.

"Traffic is backed up for blocks," Sgt. James Kruger said. "It took one officer 30 minutes to get from 31 and Huntley Road into the station."

Some motorists complained that it took them 45 minutes at midafternoon to get from Meadowdale Shopping Center in Carpentersville to Spring Hill Mall in West Dundee through the Old Town section of Carpentersville, a distance of less than three miles. Police were at Main and Washington streets directing traffic until past 7:30 p.m.

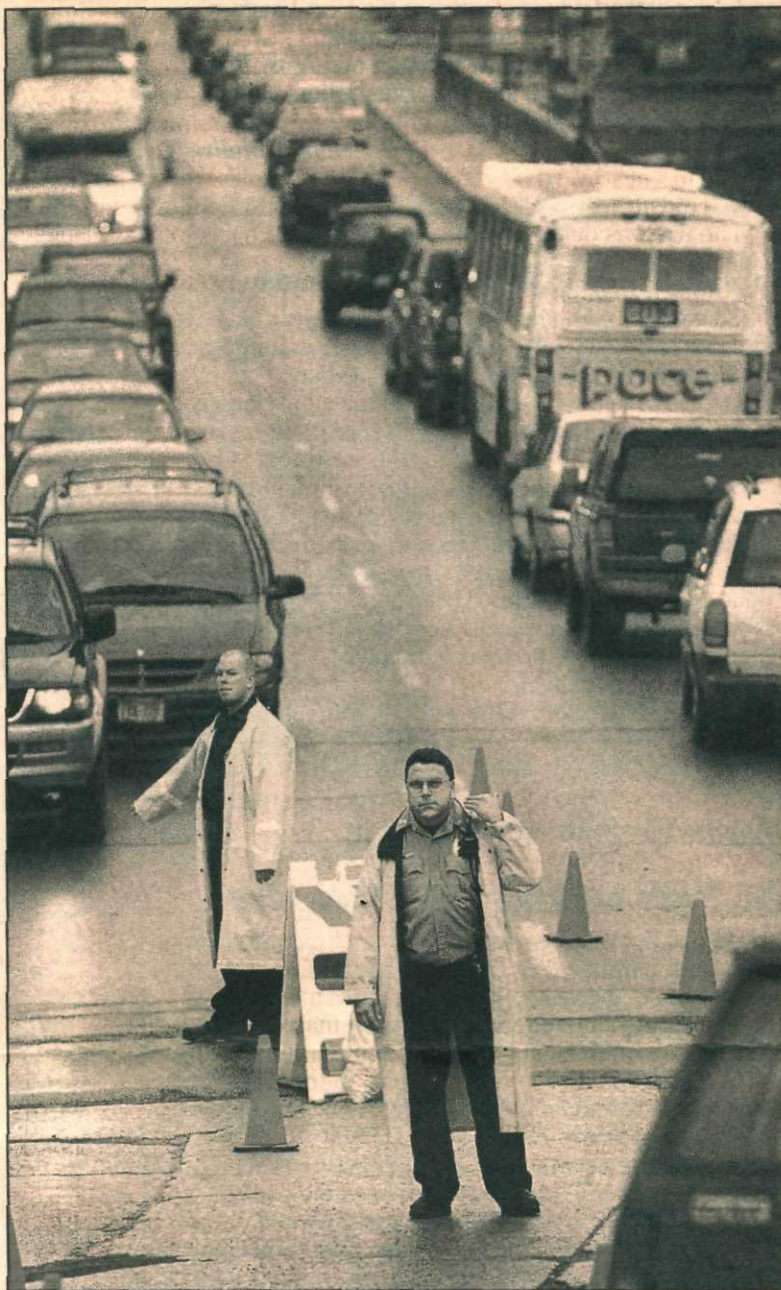
However, there were no tolls being charged at the Illinois 31 interchange with the Northwest Tollway, both to and from Chicago, compliments of DreamWorks, which made an arrangement with the state so that diverted traffic wouldn't be charged for using the tollway.

Although West Dundee was buzzing with activity Monday, that wasn't the case in East Dundee, which originally was going to be used for a scene in the film but later was written out of the script.

"Our downtown seems a little quiet," East Dundee Village Administrator Jamie Bowden said. "Just because there's barricades on (Illinois) 68 and 25 doesn't mean people can't come to our downtown. I would like to see people come in and utilize our businesses."

Filming is set to begin at about 9 a.m. today. The main scene will feature Hanks inside the bank.

Fans who hope to catch a glimpse of the star actor may have a tough time, Brand said.



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Andy Hochleutner (right) and Adam Usher, community service officers in Carpentersville, try to keep traffic flowing across the Main Street bridge in the village's Old Town area during Monday's filming of *The Road to Perdition* in West Dundee. Traffic in the area was snarled most of the day as motorists were forced into taking detours around downtown West Dundee.

"He'll be outside for a short time, but most of the filming will be done inside the bank," she said.

Brand said it is difficult to

estimate how much footage shot in West Dundee will make to the final cut, but she guessed five or 10 minutes could be in the movie.



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