

## Monday's film shoot draws crowds to The Junction parking lot

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Yellow caution tape roped off part of The Junction parking lot on Monday as film crews prepared to film a scene in Ramin Bahrani's Heartland.

The movie, starring Zac Efron and Dennis Quaid, began filming in DeKalb County in the summer. However, students still came out early Monday afternoon to 816 W. Lincoln Highway in hopes of catching a glimpse of the celebrities.

Kyle Sjudges, freshman visual communications major, skipped one of his classes to check out the shoot. Sjudges said he has followed the film since this summer, heard about Monday's shoot on Zach Efron's Twitter feed and then later confirmed it on DeKalb County's Twitter.

"We walked into the ice cream store earlier because we thought they were filming there; they told us that they would be filming right next door from [noon to midnight] and that [Efron] was supposed to show up at 2 p.m." Sjudges said. "I've seen movies he's been in, and knowing that he's in town is cool."

Sjudges, along with two other friends, arrived around noon to find a parking spot behind the yellow tape. Junior journalism major Lexie Clay said her plan for the afternoon is to see Zac Efron.

"I have a class at six," Clay said. "So I will be staying until six."

Debbie Armstrong, executive director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the movie's secrecy is due to a lack of budget for crowd control. The DeKalb Police Department assisted with crowd control for filming Monday, said production supervisor Michele Baker.

"It's pretty low key," said Doug Nelson, President of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau. "There's not a lot of fanfare."

Nelson played a "critical" role in finding all the film sites, Baker said.

"They contacted the convention and visitor's bureau and gave us a list of sites that they were looking for, so we were able to meet with them and drive them around and show them several different sites," Nelson said. "As they had questions or needed more information, we were able to find the resources and hook them up with the right people."

Bahrani chose The Junction's location because he liked what he saw.

"Our director liked this location," Baker said. "There was no other location that really fit the bill for [Bahrani], so this was the place that he really wanted to shoot."

Tom Tsiagalis, part-owner of The Junction, said he would play a small role in the film. In addition, several waitresses and about 20 locals were recruited from The Junction to be extras in a scene, which will make up eight to 10 minutes of the film, Baker said.

"They were here with a tour at the beginning, and they looked at a lot of restaurants," Tsiagalis said. "They chose The Junction as something farmers would like."

Nelson said he had the opportunity to meet both Zac Efron and Dennis Quaid.

"[Zac Efron and Dennis Quaid] are regular people," Nelson said. "[They're] very polite and just very genuine. It was nice to meet them and nice to have them in town. It's created a great buzz for DeKalb and DeKalb County this summer."

Nelson wasn't the only local to meet the celebrities. Sycamore Speedway's manager Tiffany Gerace said Efron will race alongside local drivers this week. Armstrong said Quaid was spotted on a local golf course, and junior art major Katie Wendt said both Quaid and Efron have dined at Fatty's Pub and Grill, 1312 W. Lincoln Highway.

"We know that the actors are enjoying local attractions when they have a break from filming," Armstrong said.

The crews will return to The Junction on Monday, Tsiagalis said.

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