

Producer promises Little Chicago will be made - - nothing will stop us

Little Chicago producer hold out hope film about prohibition era won't go dry

By Kate Day Sager

Olean Times Herald
September 27, 2009

With all the activity surrounding the production of the “Unstoppable” movie currently being filmed in the area, producer of another film, “Little Chicago,” say they continue to hold hope that their movie will get off the ground.

Carl Veno, executive producer of Little Chicago, said the criticism leveled at the stalled production has been hard to endure and hurtful over the past several months.

For the past two years, Mr. Veno, a native of Olean, has been trying to film his Prohibition-era movie about gangsters who lived in the area in the 1920s and 1930s. The film has hit roadblocks that have included finding the right stars and directors for the movie.

He said a documentary filmed this past year by his company and titled “The Last Prohibition Witnesses” has been well-received and will be shown on Public Broadcast Stations. The documentary includes interviews with Olean and Bradford, Pa., residents who remember the Prohibition Era in the Twin Tiers area. Filming also was done in various locations in Olean last spring and summer for the documentary, and the DVD is now available through the Little Chicago production company.

Mr. Veno said the current filming of the 20th Century Fox drama “Unstoppable starring Denzel Washington, has been good to see in the area. But he pointed out that the film took five to six years to move into the production stage. That film is about a runaway train carrying a cargo of toxic chemicals towards a community.

Mr. Veno has been encouraged with the 120,000 hits on the Little Chicago Web site, as well as the goodwill he has received from officials who have included Olean Mayor David Carucci.

“The Olean mayor has been absolutely fantastic to us,” Mr. Veno said.

“The movie will be made, I promise you that,” he added.

Mayor Carucci said he also hopes the best for the Little Chicago production, and believes Mr. Veno has had a few “snafus and hasn't been able to get it done.”

Mayor Carucci said the filming of “Unstoppable” in Olean and the surrounding communities has shown area residents that large-scale filming in the region can be done, if managed correctly.

“They (Unstoppable producers) had a plan. They came in a month in advance and let us know what they wanted to do” and followed through, Mayor Carucci said.

He said he believes the Little Chicago company could also be successful with a good plan in place.

I think he (Mr. Veno) absolutely wants to do this, he has just ran into a couple of snags,” Mayor Carucci continued. “He shot in various locations in Olean ... we even shut down downtown Olean” for the documentary filming of the Prohibition parade last summer. Mayor Carucci said he would love to see more filming in the Olean area, whether it would be through a production such as Little Chicago or other Hollywood endeavors. “I’ve told them that if they (in Hollywood) need a place to film, to come back to Olean,” he said.