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'Perdition' filming moves to Geneva

By Jim Faber and Mike Norbut

STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — In a few weeks, Tom Hanks will stumble out of a scummy boarding house room and get into a shootout downtown, right in front of an Associated Radio Store and a plumbing and heating supply house.

On Thursday, carpenters and painters from DreamWorks were working to create those locations out of Inteloquence Inc., Apple Blossoms and The Lang Store for the film based on the book, *The Road to Perdition*. The film is directed by Sam Mendes and stars Hanks, Jude Law and Paul Newman.

"Of the big shows that come to Chicago, this is one of the bigger ones," said Mike Monckton of Glenview, who was painting the Associated Radio sign on the window of Apple Blossoms. "God bless them, may they keep coming back. It's good for everyone involved."

While Geneva's transformation is just starting, scenes for the movie will be filmed in rural Kendall County starting tonight and running through Wednesday. An old-time diner was trucked in and set up on Church Road, near Plattville, to shoot some scenes.

On-location filming in the Fox Valley began in March, when crews spent two days shooting several scenes, including some featuring Hanks, in downtown West Dundee.

In downtown Geneva, where DreamWorks will film from May 21 to May 25, crews haven't finished achieving the look of a Depression-era Main Street for the movie yet. They started work last week and will keep at it until filming starts.

The big changes — removing street signs, painting over the yellow lines on Illinois 38 and boarding up some of the storefronts — won't happen until the last minute so as not to disrupt the flow of business, said Tom Holloway, a carpenter working on the Geneva sets.

Period signs already adorn most of the buildings between Second and Third streets, and simple black-and-white banners with the store's real names are strung across the period signs. A few doors and facades have been replaced or touched up, but the big visual changes are still a few days off, Monckton said.

"There are a few more days of straight painting," he noted.

Customers show interest

Inside Inteloquence, in the loft space above Starbucks and Apple Blossoms, Dan Elliott already has seen his company's front room transformed from modern graphic-design studio to a pristine 1930s boardinghouse room.

"It looked nice last week," Elliott said. "But now they are aging it."

He said having part of the movie shot in his business has piqued clients' interests.

"I think four or five customers who had never set foot in here before called

to book appointments and bring someone over," Elliott said. "They go through the motions of pretending to talk business before that final question, 'Where is the movie being made?'"

Elliott has created a Web site — www.roadtoperditionlive.com — to track the movie shoot in downtown Geneva.

Donna Shoop is planning to create a picture diary of the experience. Shoop runs Apple Blossoms and The Lang Store with her partner, Pat Esser.

So far, Shoop, whose shop will be shut down for five days of filming, has watched the door to Apple Blossoms replaced, a faux wood trim put under a window on the outside of the shop, and the awning to The Lang Store taken down.

Shoop was surprised when the location scouts started talking to her and other area businesses about bringing Hollywood to town.

"When they first approached, I was leery," she said. "I kind of thought, 'Oh, come on, that doesn't happen out here.'"