Mayor meets actor



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Actor Burt Reynolds and Seneca Mayor Dan Alexander pose during a break in filming of the movie "Elbow Grease" this week.

Reynolds gets invitation to Jazz on the Alley

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Burt Reynolds did not get a key to the city from Seneca Mayor Dan Alexander.

However, the mayor did give the actor an open invitation to join the fun at Jazz on the Alley anytime he wants.

If he's still in town, maybe Reynolds will take the mayor up on his invitation when they close Ram Cat Alley this evening for music, food and good times.

Alexander said he got the opportunity to meet Reynolds Tuesday during the filming of a scene at a home in Friendship.

"He has an open invitation to come visit," Al-

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ACTOR: 'He was very complimer

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exander said Wednesday. "We talked for a while. I got him a Jazz on the Alley T-shirt."

Producers of the movie "Elbow Grease" closed Ram Cat Alley last week for the filming of a scene. The street was turned into a vibrant marketplace with vendors and people milling to film a scene of the romantic-comedy, which by all accounts will be family-friendly.

Reynolds, who is featured in the movie, arrived for his scenes this week.

Photos of the actor are showing up on Facebook. Phil Shirley, who heads the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department for Oconee, posted a photo of the actor by his side at High Falls Park, where scenes of the movie were shot. There is another photo of Reynolds with High Falls Park Ranger Lynn Forester.

Shirley said Forester saved the day during the filming of a scene where Reynolds is fishing from the dock with the actor playing his son. He said Reynolds was to be wearing a fishing vest, but there were none to be found. Forester got his personal fishing vest and gave it to the actor for the scenes being shot.

Reynolds autographed the vest and returned it to Forester when the shots were completed.

Shirley said he had the good fortune of driving Reynolds from scene to scene on a golf cart.

Shirley said the actor was "very approachable" and never turned down a request to sign an autograph or pose for a photo on the set.

Alexander also posted photos on Facebook, including one where he is joined by the actor, Shelby Henderson of the Oconee County Chamber of Commerce, who also is doubling as casting director of "Elbow Grease," and Riley Johnson, the city's events coordinator. The mayor also posted a photo of himself alongside the actor.

"He was very complimentary of our area," Alexander said. "It turns out we have a mutual friend."

Alexander said the actor was gracious with his time. The mayor said Reynolds signed an autograph for one of his grandsons, and signed a NAPA Auto Parts hat for the sister of City Councilman Joel Ward, who works at the Seneca NAPA store.

"She's fighting cancer," the mayor said of Ward's sister, Sharen. "She's a fighter."



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

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At right, actor Burt Reynolds is shown with Mayor Dan Alexander and others while in Seneca this week for the shooting of the movie "Elbow Grease." At left, Reynolds and Oconee County Parks, Recreation and Tourism Director Phil Shirley pause for a photo at High Falls Park.

The mayor said he'd always wanted to meet the actor.

"We had a real good conversation," Alexander said.

The mayor said Reynolds brought up Lake Keowee, which the actor recalled being built while he was in Oconee for the filming of the movie "Deliverance" in the early 1970s.

The filming of "Elbow Grease" is scheduled to continue through Tuesday.

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