

SOUTHEAST MISSOURIAN

Filmmaker rolls back into Jackson

By Joshua Hartwig ~ Southeast Missourian

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The film "All Nite Skate" will shoot in the area this summer. Clockwise from left, Gretchen Griggs, the film's producer; PJ Gaynard, cinematographer; Jackie Riggins, owner of the Puxico Skating Rink, which will stand in for the Jackson Skate Rink in the film; and Nick Murphy, the writer and director of "All Nite Skate," pose for a photo Saturday at Puxico Skating Rink in Puxico, Missouri.

Submitted photo by Joe Hellman

Nick Murphy and colleagues have rolled back to Jackson to continue work on their 1990s-set production — "All Nite Skate" — and they're on the lookout for equally ambitious Southeast Missouri-native cast and crew to make their throwback dream a reality.

Murphy — former Jackson "rink rat" and filmmaker since the 1990s — wanted to create a film that localized his childhood experiences and to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his company,

Spoon Pictures.

He describes “All Nite Skate” as a “semi-autobiographical story” that highlights life in days gone by that anyone can relate to. It also serves as a film to honor former classmates who have passed on.

The project has made leaps and bounds since a fundraiser in October at Coin-Op Cantina in Cape Girardeau, which Murphy said “was a smashing success,” with multiple items donated by local businesses who were “so supportive.”

And now, the next phase to take place in Jackson will be this summer. There are a lot of details Murphy said he is still working on with city officials, but “for the most part and weather-permitting,” he said that June 8, uptown Jackson’s streets will be closed temporarily for filming of “All Nite Skate,” with more details soon.

“We’re going to try to put it out there so the town knows on that Thursday night (June 7, when the streets are being set up for filming), you can’t park, because we need everything to look authentic,” producer Gretchen Griggs said. “We can’t have cars that are new there. We’re getting a ton of people from the area as background pedestrians and dancers. We haven’t even begun casting yet.”

For anyone interested in being part of the casting call for the project, Murphy said he’d like to receive a front-facing, “clean photo from head to toe,” along with name, contact information, availability and resume. He said he’s looking for rink rats, individuals age 14 to 18, “or someone who looks 18.”

“We have a core group that we’re going to be looking for that will be hanging out with us for the three weeks that we’re here,” Griggs said.

And if someone has pictures of himself or herself in ’90s wardrobe, “even better,” added cinematographer PJ Gaynard.

The Puxico, Missouri, skating rink will serve as the Jackson Skate Rink in the film.

Murphy said the owner of the Puxico rink, Jackie Riggins, was worried that if someone else purchased it, it might not remain a skating rink, and she refused to let that happen.

“She grew up skating there the same as we did here,” Murphy said. “She said she didn’t want it to become anything other than a rink. She kept that alive, and we’re really glad she did.”

Murphy said Puxico’s rink has the same “feel and character” as the one that used to be in Jackson, but the original plan was to film the movie in Los Angeles.

“We’ve seen places in L.A. a million times, right? But there is room to tell a story here — a Missourian story,” Gaynard said.

Murphy, Griggs and Gaynard said they encourage anyone who is interested in being part of “All Nite Skate” — cast and crew — to send inquiries to allniteskatefilm@gmail.com. And to donate to the project, search for allniteskate at www.fracturedatlas.org.

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