



HAKI STABINSKI, director of the film "Walking Girl," points out directions to his actors and film crew. DANIEL LUEDERT/DN

NEBRASKA



DANIEL LUEDERT/DN
MEGAN DILLON and Kyle Johnston laugh while crew members prepare the scene to be filmed. Johnston is a freshman theater major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Hollywood discovers Gretna

'Walking Girl' most recent film to be shot in Cornhusker state

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Senior Reporter

GRETNA - Hollywood may be 1,500 miles away, but a little piece of it exists right here in Nebraska.

On Wednesday, the crew of the independent film "Walking Girl" set up its cameras and lights in this community of 1,609, about 35 miles northeast of Lincoln.

In doing so, the technical crew provided Nebraska with yet another taste of movie making.

Written, directed and produced by Haki Stabinski, "Walking Girl" is the story of a young woman who breaks off her engagement because of pre-wedding jitters. She then moves to a small town in Nebraska, making a profound impact on the lives of those she meets there.

The movie industry itself has been impacting Nebraska residents lately.

The state boasts a number of well-known movies filmed here, many shot recently. They include: "To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar," "Citizen Ruth," "Terms of Endearment," "My Antonia" and "O Pioneers!"

Stabinski chose Nebraska as the site for filming because of his friendship with "Walking Girl" star Megan Dillon, a Gretna

“Nebraska has a lot to offer the industry. With the Nebraska work ethic, our crews are some of the best available.”

LAURIE RICHARDS
Nebraska state film officer

native.

Dillon suggested her home state after reading Stabinski's script. Stabinski agreed Nebraska would make a good location after seeing its landscape and discovering the low cost of making movies in the state.

"It's pretty easy to come here, just set up, and do your work," explained Laurie Richards, Nebraska state film officer. "Your money goes a long way filming in Nebraska."

Richards added that the state's diverse landscape and its relative newness as captured on film were further benefits of working here.

The crew for "Walking Girl" plans to utilize more of Nebraska than just Gretna. Already, it has filmed in Nebraska City and Elkhorn.

Lisa Hatch, production coordinator for "Walking Girl," said no release date has been set for the movie. She said the film probably

would spend six months to a year in editing and then travel the independent film festival circuit.

Richards said film industry scouts often discovered opportunities in Nebraska through a production guide - printed by the Nebraska Film Office - listing Nebraska services for movie makers.

Richards added that Nebraska's film industry will continue to grow because of the presence of MidWest Express, which flies to Los Angeles and New York and stops at Omaha's Eppley Airfield.

The state also has a number of people involved with the movie business who make the location appealing, she said.

"Nebraska has a lot to offer the industry," Richards said. "With the Nebraska work ethic, our crews are some of the best available."