

## News

Is mid-Hudson becoming Hollywood North?

### Why filmmakers love it here

By [Tim Logan](#)

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We had Nicholas Cage dining in Goshen. Then a Blooming Grove lovefest for George Clooney. In June, there were rumors of Russell Crowe appearing in Tuxedo. And last week, he actually showed up at Stewart Airport.

There's been a lot of Hollywood in the mid-Hudson lately, and along with all that glitz and glamour comes cash, plenty of it. Enough that the film industry is starting to make an impact in the local economy.

In the last few years, the region has hosted dozens of movie shoots, ranging from Steven Spielberg's "War of the Worlds" to small independent films and cable documentaries.

And many of those movies bring hundreds of cast and crew members who sleep in our hotels, eat at our diners and fill their tanks at local gas stations.

Last week, "American Gangster," starring Russell Crowe and Denzel Washington, brought 300 people to Stewart Airport. They shot for two days and spent most of the week there working on sets.

It's business the airport gets sporadically, said John Meehan, director of business development for Supermarine, which services aircraft at Stewart and owns the hangars where the movie was shot. Nothing to rely on, but a nice infusion of cash.

At least one town is making films a part of its economic development strategy.

Since he took office in January, Tuxedo Supervisor Peter Dolan has been "bending over backwards" to lure moviemakers, pitching the town to producers and chatting up location scouts. So far this year, the town has hosted four shoots, he said, which have helped local businesses. It's also a boon to the town, which charges permitting fees and asks reimbursement for police services.

"It's about making money. I'm not going to lie to you," Dolan said. "I'm not here to meet

Russell Crowe."

But Dolan's glad to have him around. And the more that happens, the more he hopes word will spread about Tuxedo in the tightknit film industry.

That's happening here, says Laurent Rejto. He's director of the Hudson Valley Film Commission, a Woodstock-based nonprofit that works to bring movie shoots to the region.

His office gets three to five calls a week from location scouts and producers, he said, looking for sites and crews. Last year it worked with 34 production companies here.

"The area now has really got a reputation for being friendly to film production," Rejto said. "That's a good thing."

It's good for the economy, too. The commission just finished with a shoot in Hudson and Catskill that spent \$1.5 million in the area. When "War of the Worlds" shot in Greene County in 2004, it spent \$240,000 on extras alone, Rejto said.

But what would it take to really put the Hudson Valley on the film-making map? Rejto said a studio, ideally one backed by one of the many stars with vacation homes in the area, would be a huge boost.

He's even got a building in mind, the old IBM plant at Tech City in Kingston. There's also a star, too: part-time Gardiner resident Robert De Niro.

"Wishful thinking," Rejto said with a chuckle. "But sometimes you get what you wish for."