



Perris News

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Video Crew Discovers Answer to a Burning Question

A video crew from Hollywood recently came to Perris to answer a burning question—can you pop popcorn with a flamethrower.

It was a serious question for the team shooting a pilot episode for the series "What If."

The planned series for the Cartoon Network poses the simple question and then offers elaborate potential answers.

The "stars" of the show are three teen-age guys who pose the questions and await the results.

So about 20 technicians, camera operators, special-effects wizards and other Tinseltown professionals came to Perris Valley Airport, propane-powered flamethrower in hand, for the big test.

The Los Angeles-based crew spent three days in Perris and came away mightily impressed with the hospitality and the surroundings.

"You have a wonderful City," director Chuck Dalaklis told Michael McDermott, Perris' Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager. "We've had a great time here."

McDermott worked with the production crew to bring the project to Perris. He said Perris has been used in several movie and television productions in recent years, including "Changeling," "The Bucket List" and "Eagle Eye."

The City has several unique venues filmmakers often find attractive, including the recently restored train Depot, the Perris Valley Airport and the Orange Empire Railway Museum. The City has created a film commission as part of its Perris Tourism Council to streamline the permitting process and get the cameras rolling in Perris.

City officials obtained the permission and needed permits to video the "What If" shoot in less than a day, McDermott said.

"When you want to put a flamethrower to popcorn, that can raise some eyebrows in getting the proper permits," McDermott said. "We want to make the process as smooth as possible."

Attracting Hollywood to Perris could prove lucrative.

For the recent video shoot, the production company stayed at the local Holiday Inn Express, ate at local restaurants, even visited hardware centers to purchase their exotic gear.

Dalaklis led the crew during several hours of work at the Perris airport. He coached the three teen-ager hosts, pitching them dialogue or telling them to spout their lines with the proper gusto. Several scenes had to be reshot once or twice to get just the proper feel.

All in a day's work, said producer Cameron Dieterich.

So, can you cook popcorn with a flamethrower? That all depends. No amount of flame would cook kernels inside a small tin designed to go inside a microwave. The flame melted the tin and incinerated the corn but none cooked.

When the crew moved to a derelict Volkswagen van filled with popcorn kernels, including some spread on a makeshift rack, the results proved better. It took many blasts from the flamethrower (which charred what was left of the old VW) but a few kernels finally began popping. A couple flew out of a hole where a window once kept out the weather. A crewmember standing off-camera tossed a couple handfuls of already-popped kernels to enhance the effect.

Dalaklis said he's been to Perris several times in the past to direct skydiving action at Perris Valley Airport, one of the world's premiere parachute-jumping venues. His most recent work was more down to earth but gratifying nonetheless.

"We burned up the place—literally," he said.



A Hollywood production crew turned a flamethrower on a van filled with popcorn to see if the kernels inside would cook. The production was for a pilot episode of the series "What If" scheduled for the Cartoon Network.

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