

Stars to visit K'port for filming of Empire Falls

Ed Harris, Joanne Woodward and more will visit this fall

By Parke Burmeister
Staff Writer

Ed Harris, Joanne Woodward, Robin Wright and Helen Hunt will be among the visitors to Kennebunkport and Cape Porpoise this fall. They will use locations around town to film scenes for an HBO film, *Empire Falls*, directed by Paul Newman, produced by Falls Films, Inc.

The film's script is written by former Colby College professor Richard Russo, and is based on his Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Empire Falls*.

Falls is about an imagined Maine mill town in decline, and the characters that live there, according to Location Manager Lynn Kippax. He said Kennebunkport, Ogunquit and York are going to represent Martha's Vineyard in several scenes.

Those scenes take place over three seasons, so filming in those areas will occur in mid-September and in late October. The most ambitious shoot will take place around Sept. 18. It will include scenes in Dock Square and at the Colony Hotel, as well as several driving scenes on certain streets throughout town.

"We have been quietly thinking about shooting in this area for some time," Kippax told Kennebunkport selectmen at their meeting August 28. "After all, this is a Maine story,

why not film it here?"

Kippax came to the selectmen's meeting asking them to approve the contract granting Falls Films permission to use the town. The contract spelled out remuneration to the town for its cooperation. Kippax said Falls Films will approach some business owners to compensate them as well.

Producers are working with a marine coordinator, a fisherman with some movie experience, to maintain smooth operations for fisherman and others at the Cape Porpoise Pier. "He knows that the pier is intended to serve the needs of fisherman, and not for making movies," Kippax said.

The producers will pay for three police officers and two cruisers to remain on duty while crews work in Dock Square. Kippax said Falls Films hopes to cooperate with the town at every turn. "Let me know if we are not doing what we should be doing, and we will change it fast," he said.

Kippax said HBO will spend at least \$11 million to produce *Empire Falls*, and it will probably not appear in theaters. "The film is a huge commitment for HBO," he said. "They are trying to give their subscribers something really worthwhile."

But there is talk of releasing the film on home video at some point, he said.

Kippax said the cast of *Empire Falls*, who has already spent time in Skowhegan and Waterville, has enjoyed working in Maine so far. "One thing that has pleased the crew is that the people they have met in Maine have been worth their time," he said.



TROLLEY BUS BEING SENT FROM SWITZERLAND — This trolley bus left Lausanne, Switzerland and arrived in Boston early Wednesday. It will arrive at the Seashore Trolley Museum by the end of next week. See story on page 4.

Swiss trolley bus to be here soon

Electric trolley bus and passenger trailer arrived in Boston early Wednesday and will be at the Seashore Trolley Museum by the end of next week

Lausanne trolley bus #653 and passenger trailer #950 arrived in Boston early Wednesday morning after an historic journey from their hometown in Switzerland.

The electric trolley bus and accompanying passenger trailer were carried by truck from Lausanne to Basel, then rode a barge on the Rhine river to Antwerp. At Antwerp, they were loaded onto a container ship for the journey across the Atlantic to Boston. Upon arrival in the Port of Boston, they will be lifted by crane onto two flat trailers for the final 85-mile trip to Seashore Trolley Museum, expected to take place within a week of arrival in Boston.

Trolley buses, common in Europe but less so in the United States, are a sort of hybrid between a trolley and a bus. A true trolley, also known as a streetcar, is a

rail vehicle powered by an overhead electrical wire. A trolley bus, in contrast, has tires and runs on the road, but is powered in a similar way. While Americans are familiar with trolleys that are nicknamed "trolleys," relatively few have seen or ridden a real trolley bus.

One of the few trolley bus systems in this country is in the Boston area, where the MBTA maintains routes in suburbs North Cambridge, Belmont and Watertown.

"They are environmentally friendly, and well liked by residents," says Lydia Rivera, spokeswoman for the MBTA, who adds that because trolley buses are run by electricity they are exhaust-free. Rivera notes that the MBTA's fleet of 26 existing trolley buses is on its way to replacement; the first of the new buses arrived just weeks ago.

Lausanne, Switzerland, has one of Europe's most extensive trolley bus systems, begun in 1932. The system is known worldwide, and includes 10 lines with over 90 trolley buses, 64 passenger trailers and 28 dual-mode articulated vehicles.

Seashore Trolley Museum's acquisition of the Swiss vehicles arose from a friendship between Museum trustee and parts manager Dan Cohen and Swiss-American dual national Henri-David Philippe. Cohen was a manager at Boston's MBTA for 31 years before his recent retirement, and met Philippe about 10 years ago while the latter was taking photographs in the Boston subway.

Philippe asked Cohen a number of questions, and the two became friends. Cohen visited Philippe in Switzerland, where Philippe was working as a trolley bus driver to pay his way through law school.

Philippe went on to help found a trolley bus preservation group, which adopted Seashore Trolley Museum as a "brother organization." The group has preserved four retired trolley buses in

Switzerland, and has prepared the bus and trailer for Seashore Trolley Museum meticulously, so that they will arrive in perfect working order.

The museum has an existing collection of 15 trolley buses, in addition to its extensive rail trolley and conventional bus collections. This is the first time a passenger trailer will be added to the collection, however.

"It's a new and very unusual exhibit," says Cohen. "It's the first time anybody has brought a historic trolley bus and trailer to the U.S., although they are common in Europe." He adds that in Lausanne even diesel buses sometimes pull passenger trailers.

Seashore Trolley Museum will run the Swiss trolley bus and trailer in public demonstrations, after updates to the existing overhead wire. Exhibition demonstration is expected to begin in about a month after arrival of the two vehicles.

The museum is located on Log Cabin Road in Kennebunkport. Call 207-967-2800 or visit www.trolley-museum.org for more information.