

Film-making duo seeks Montana cast

April 6, 2010

FORT BELKNAP — A new movie is certainly earning the label Montana Made.

"Winter in the Blood" is written by Montanans, will be filmed on the Hi-Line, is directed by a pair of Montana twins and features Montana actors.

The cast will be exclusively Native American and mostly from Montana.

Set mostly on the Fort Belknap Reservation, "Winter in the Blood" has principal speaking roles for 10 to 17-year-old Indian boys and Indian men and women in their mid-20s to mid-50s for both speaking and nonspeaking parts.

The casting call is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the Great Falls Civic Center. Filming could begin as early as July.

The movie is based on a book of the same title by acclaimed Montana author James Welch. Welch was born in Browning and raised on the Blackfeet and Fort Belknap reservations.

Emerging as a writer in the 1970s, Welch became known for telling stories of modern Native American life that transcended the western genre.

Soon after "Winter in the Blood" was published, Welch was approached about making it a movie. But the studio soon lost interest after realizing it couldn't attract the money needed to finance a film starring a nameless Native American actor.

The book is getting a second chance to make it on the big screen thanks to Montana filmmakers Andrew and Alex Smith.

In 2002, the brothers filmed the low-budget "The Slaughter Rule" in several northcentral Montana locales, including Tracy's diner in Great Falls.

Appearing on a few screens nationwide, the movie instead reached an audience through the Sundance Film Festival. It was optioned by the Sundance Network and now regularly plays on the Independent Film Channel and Showtime.

Like "The Slaughter Rule," which is about a small town football team, their latest film also takes place in rural Montana.

"Winter in the Blood" tells the story of Virgil First Raise, a rancher haunted by the tragic loss of both his father and brother. Virgil copes with that loss as he wanders the Hi-Line searching for the wife who left him, taking his rifle and electric razor.

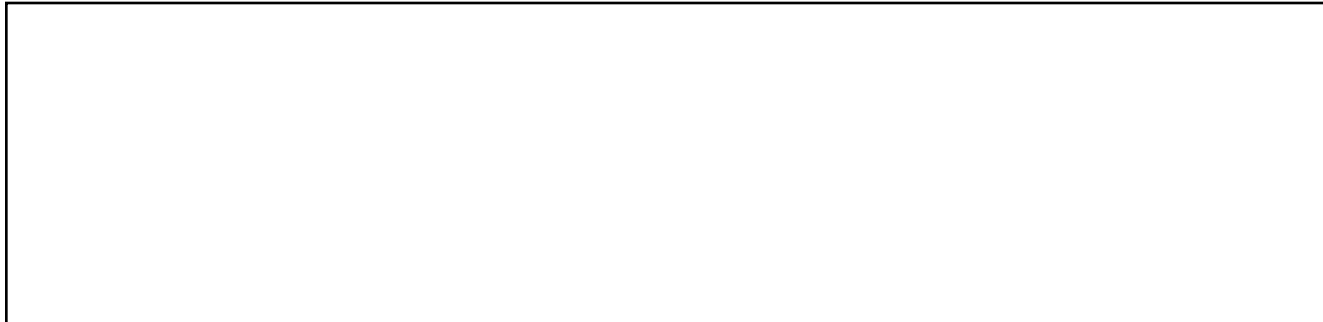
The Smith brothers have an eye for upcoming talent.

In "The Slaughter Rule," they cast Ryan Gosling, who went on to star in the hit "The Notebook," and Amy Adams, who has since been nominated for an Academy Award in "Doubt" and starred in both "Enchanted" and "Julie and Julia."

To help prepare for the audition, people can go online to www.winterinthebloodfilm.com and read three scenes from the movie.

One features 12 and 14-year-old brothers caught in the rain. In another, two lovers in their 20s or 30s

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who haven't seen each other in a while catch up in a bar. And in the third, an older rancher woos a window and teases her elderly mother.

6574, 800-438-6600 or
kskornogoski@greatfallstribune.com.

No acting experience is necessary. People interested are warned that casting calls can take time.

Excuses, excuses

GLASGOW — Editor of the Glasgow Courier, Samar Fay, isn't one to make excuses or political statements.

For days, Fay and her husband Mike waited and wondered — why haven't we received our 2010 Census form?

The mystery slowly unraveled, revealing a time-tested excuse.

Training to be a bird dog, Fay's 11-month-old golden retriever Apollo often can be spotted carrying "trophies" inside their house between Nashua and Glasgow.

The trophies are usually such lovely prizes as deer legs and cow hooves. Recently, Fay noticed Apollo had that familiar devilish gleam in his eye.

Instead of coming inside when called, he ran away as if to say, "Ha! I've got something you want."

By the time she was able to lure him and his prize into the house, the plastic bag and the 10-question census questionnaire inside were torn to bits.

Evidence in hand, Fay went to Glasgow's census questionnaire assistance center. Though eyebrows may have been raised, no questions were asked as Fay got a new form to quickly fill out.

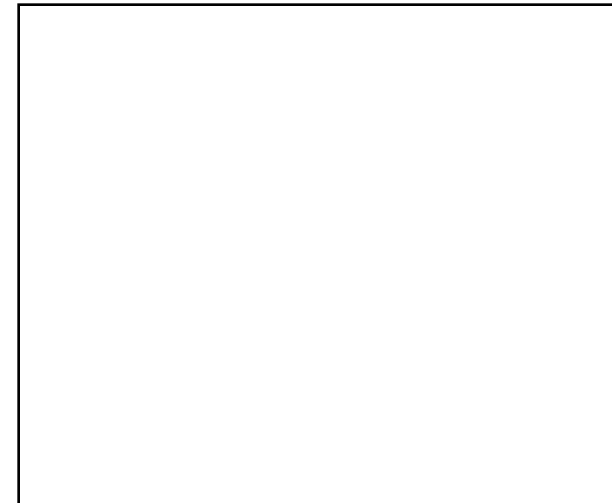
"It was a new excuse to her," Fay said laughing.

Destroying or damaging federal property could be a violation of 18 USC 1074, Fay learned. Fortunately for Apollo, the feds — perhaps persuaded by his brown puppy eyes — agreed not to press charges.

"He is a big gorgeous, goofy puppy," Fay said. "He just chews everything."

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