

The Carthage Press

Carthage sites to star in Japan ¹

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Ron Graber/The Press – Carthage artists Lowell Davis and Bob Tommey were the stars of the show on Monday afternoon as a film crew from Japan visited Red Oak II as part of a series on Route 66.

Kouguu

It's the Japanese term for "welcome" that many Carthage residents may want to familiarize themselves with in anticipation of tourists from across the globe visiting our community in the near future.

Carthage is one of four communities along Route 66 that will be featured next month on the Japanese broadcasting giant NHK showing footage currently being shot by a film crew here in Carthage this week.

"This is a nice, neat town," said Kazuo Ueda, a California producer working with the film crew from Japan, members of which traveled Route 66 several weeks ago to scout out locations that would be a good fit with their program.

Ueda said many cities along Route 66 were too big, and he said he was also looking for places with very little crime since he wants a pleasant experience for the people from Japan that he expects to visit the area as a result of the television program.

“There will be many people coming down from Japan,” said Ueda, who said filmmakers quickly rejected Springfield as a possible filming location when they saw the Carthage Square.

“That is the United States,” said Ueda, who compared the downtown setting to the images seen in the movie *Back to the Future*. “It looks like a movie set to us,” he said.

During Monday’s filming, Carthage artist Lowell Davis talked about his creation, Red Oak II, and introduced his friend, fellow artist Bob Tommey, who was in period costume and showed the crew around the Marshal Hooker Jail at Red Oak II.



Ron Graber/The Press – A Japanese film crew tapes Lowell Davis as he explains his creation of Red Oak II

Ueda said the crew spent most of the past weekend talking with Carthage residents along Grand Avenue, many of whom were found working on their gardens and yards.

The crew is also getting footage at the Square, the Battle of Carthage Museum, Route 66 Drive-In Theatre, and Precious Moments.

The Carthage crew spent 10 days filming in Santa Fe, while a second crew was in Oklahoma City and Santa Monica.

The visit to Red Oak II comes at an exciting time as renovation work nears completion on the Black Hen Restaurant, which will reopen this summer.

Larry Frickenschmidt, who purchased many of the Red Oak II buildings from Lowell Davis, said weather permitting, he hopes to have the restaurant open by June 1 as a key part of the attraction's rebirth.

Frickenschmidt and his wife, Lois, have overseen renovations of many of the buildings they now own, which includes the blacksmith shop, restaurant and trolley car, town hall, feed store, wren house and corral and marshal's cabin.

"We have spent a year and a half remodeling all the buildings," said Frickenschmidt. "They are built to last."

He said he wants Red Oak II to once again be a family place, where local residents and tourists traveling Route 66 can go to dine and enjoy some quality time seeing the sights.

"We think its something that will bring people from miles around," he said.

¹ This article courtesy of The Carthage Press