

Movie maps draw tourists

■ Tours spotlight rural Alberta film locations

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There's something alluring about the idea of walking where Brad Pitt walked, eating where Heath Ledger ate and sleeping where Robin Williams slept.

It seems that everyone wants a little piece of Hollywood for themselves, which is why driving maps that spotlight a variety of film locations are now being used to attract tourists to southern Alberta.

For years, filmmakers have flocked to the region because of its comparatively low production costs and its natural beauty.

"One of the advantages to filming here is the diversity," said Tina Alford of the Alberta Film Commission.

"Clint Eastwood said it best ... Alberta is great because you can get five different looks within an hour of Calgary."

Alberta's cities, towns and rural landscape have been used as a backdrop in several independent films and in blockbusters like *Brokeback Mountain*, *The Assassination of Jesse James*, *Legends of the Fall* and *Superman II and III*.

In 2007, *Passchendaele*, a Paul Gross film scheduled for release this fall, was filmed in Fort Macleod, and the CBC series *Heartland* continues to be filmed in and around High River.

Now, the tourism industry is hoping to capitalize on the

success of Alberta's film industry with the distribution of the movie-inspired tour maps.

There are already a number of people coming to southern Alberta specifically to see where their favourite movie was filmed, said Troy Payne,

spokesman for the Calgary Regional Partnership.

"We want to keep them in the region a little longer (and) spend a few more dollars."

The Calgary Regional Partnership, Travel Alberta, Alberta Film and four regional associations worked together to create three driving tours that wind through southern Alberta, hitting set locations in small communities that wouldn't otherwise make it onto most visitors' itinerary.

Communities like High River hope that tourists will come to see

places like the "Superman house," but stay long enough to explore the rest of the attractions and services the town has to offer, said Heather Anderson, economic development co-ordinator for High River.

There were 250,000 maps distributed to tourist and information centres across southern Alberta, and the public response has been encouraging, Payne said. "They went out in June, and I'm already getting calls for more."

More information is available on www.albertamoviemaps.com.



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Date 29.07.2008	Circ. 4647	Page 11	2 / 2



Photo by Alyssa Burnham

This familiar house, at 410 — 5 St. S.E., was Clark Kent's childhood home in *Superman III*. It's one of the High River locations featured on the driving map of southern Alberta.