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'TRANSFORMERS' TAKE OVER CHICAGO

Local 727 Members Work on Blockbuster Movie's Windy City Shoot

When director Michael Bay brought his brand of big-budget action flicks to Chicago this summer, Teamsters Local 727 members were in the middle of the "Transformers 3" mania.

Local 727 Vice President John Coli Jr., who visited the set with other union representatives on July 21 while crews were filming at Wacker Drive and Wabash Avenue, was impressed with the organized chaos of the movie-making process.

"With everything they have going on at once, it is remarkable how efficiently everything is run," Coli said. "We're proud that our members can be part of something that brings so much positive attention to our city."

During the Chicago shoot in July and August, 70 Local 727 members and 30 Local 399 members from Los Angeles worked as drivers, ferrying massive equipment to and from the set each day.

John Gustafson, who has been a Local 727 member since 1991, said working on "Transformers 3" has been a wholly unique experience.

"I've never seen anything like this before – helicopter footage almost every day, 12 cameras rolling on every shot," Gustafson said. "Everything is done on such a huge scale. It's unreal."

Local 727 Business Representative Jon Magna said the members were calling the experience "Bayhem."

"They were skydiving off Willis Tower and blowing up Michigan Avenue, just crazy things," Magna said. "But the city was so cooperative and understanding, and the people were great. Everyone was happy to have them here."

"You really couldn't ask for a better group of guys to work with," Gustafson said.

City officials estimated the movie brought 1,200 jobs and more than \$20 million to the local economy. The total cost of making the movie is \$400 million and climbing.

Film crews turned much of downtown into a "war zone" over the course of the shoot, while still featuring the signature Chicago skyline and the character of the Midwest city.

"Being in Chicago has been amazing," said actor Josh Duhamel, who will reprise his role as Major Lennox. "This city is so beautiful."



Producer Lorenzo Di Bonaventura echoed Duhamel's sentiments.

"It's going to spread like a virus around Hollywood about how great [a time] we had here. ... All of us felt like this was the best city we've ever shot in," Di Bonaventura told the Chicago Sun-Times.

After the crews finished filming in Chicago, they continued on to northwest Indiana and Detroit. They also are scheduled to film in Washington, D.C., and Space Coast, Florida.

"Transformers 3," the third movie in the blockbuster franchise based on the line of popular toys, is scheduled to be released on July 1, 2011.

Teamsters Local 727 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, which represents more than 100,000 hardworking men and women throughout Illinois and Indiana.