

Local backdrop

## 'Teenage Dirtbag' tells CdA tale

Writer's years in Lake City inspired independent film

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Filmmaker Regina Crosby laughs with her crew during a wardrobe consultation Friday afternoon.

When it comes to independent films about awkward teens growing up as social outcasts in Idaho towns, could "Teenage Dirtbag" be the next "Napoleon Dynamite"?

It will take a while to find out. The \$1 million production began filming Wednesday in Coeur d'Alene, with about 60 cast members, 40 crew members and 100 extras bringing to life a script loosely based on writer-director-actor Regina Crosby's formative years in the Lake City.

"It's based on a true story inspired by a person I went to high school with who had a real tragic life," Crosby said. "It's not a happy story. It's a drama with a really good message at the end."

Lewis Herrera, unit production manager, said "Teenage Dirtbag" should be ready for distribution early next year, and it will be submitted to various festivals, including Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival in Utah, where "Dynamite" got rave reviews in 2004, earning the low-budget independent film a distribution deal with Fox Searchlight.

Ultimately grossing \$45 million at the box office and more than \$100 million in DVD sales, "Dynamite" was written and directed by Jared Hess and set in his hometown of Preston, a small southeastern Idaho farming community near the Utah border. It told the story of the geeky title character as he helps a fellow outsider, Pedro, run for class president.

Crosby graduated from Coeur d'Alene High School in the late 1980s and then North Idaho College and University of Idaho before moving to Orange County, Calif., eight years ago. She hosted a TV show in the Los Angeles area and began acting before she started thinking about writing the script for her movie.

"Three years ago I realized this would be an amazing story for film," she said.

It took about a year to procure financing, she said, and because of the limited budget, "everyone who is on the film is on it because they want to be."

The Coeur d'Alene City Council last week approved permits for filming in the downtown area over the next 18 days. Producers are waiting for permission to shoot scenes in a local high school. Crosby said it was important

to her that the movie be filmed in Coeur d'Alene to remain true to the story.

"Lots of producers wanted to film in L.A. and make it look like Coeur d'Alene, and that was unacceptable to me," she said. "It was a matter of finding the right home for it to keep the quality and not have it go in the wrong direction."