

News

Video commemorates historic hotel fire

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Morning Star Staff

Efforts continue to commemorate a significant act of bravery.

Resident Bruce Mol is in the midst of producing a video marking the 100th anniversary of the Okanagan Hotel fire, which claimed 11 lives including that of Archie Hickling, who saved three people.

"Production is on schedule and going really well," said Mol, a professional videographer.

"It's been exciting. There's more to the story than what was in the newspaper. We're still finding out information."

Some of that information has come from interviewing modern-day Vernon firefighters about fire behaviour and how techniques have changed over the years.

"The hotel was made out of brick veneer plastered on to wood. As soon as they sprayed water on the bricks, it cracked and the building fell apart," said Mol.

The Aug. 10, 1909 fire at the hotel — which was where Liquidation World now is on 30th Avenue — continues to be the greatest loss of life in the community.

The opening scene of the video has been completed and it includes actor Clive Goodrich portraying Hickling.

A closing song has also been put together by local singer Rob Dinwoodie.

"The song sums up all of the questions we had about the incident," said Mol.

The cost of the video project is about \$22,000, and most of that is being covered through people donating their time, expertise, space and equipment.

"The outpouring of generosity and excitement has been really positive," said Mol.

But about \$1,000 is still needed to complete the project by August and 100 copies of a 24-page booklet are being sold to raise the funds.

The booklet contains all of the *Vernon News* articles from 1909 about the fire and the subsequent investigation and inquiry.

"For \$10 each, people can own a piece of history and get a basic outline of the store," said Mol.

The booklet is available from the Greater Vernon Museum.

Anyone interested in the video project



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Actor Clive Goodrich climbs out of a window at O'Keefe Ranch for a scene in an Okanagan Hotel fire video.

can contact Mol at 306-2894 or by going to www.bmidd.com/ohf.