

Local deputies win film award

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Five Santa Clarita Valley sheriffs' deputies were named public employees of the year in the 17th annual California on Location Awards Ceremony.

Sergeants Gregg Lewison, Cortland Myers, Ron Olfert, William Velek and Deputy Lance Westfall were nominated for the award for their "film-friendly practices and efforts to help keep location filming successful in Santa Clarita," according to a statement from the California on Location Awards.

The Sheriff's Department personnel, who received the award Sunday at the Millennium Biltmore, were responsible for working with the Santa Clarita Film Office managing traffic and crowd control when requested.

Lewison and the other Santa Clarita Valley deputies commonly assisted film crews with traffic and crowd control but were often asked to assist with a variety of other logistical duties, Lewison said.

"The Santa Clarita (Valley) deputies received numerous compliments from production companies for their abilities to respond to numerous filming requests and frequent changes to filming schedules," said Heather Leuning, spokeswoman for the city.

"They have resolved unexpected incidents, fulfilled last-minute requests, and provided film crews with traffic control services while saving production more than \$30,000 in the first year of the program."

The deputies have assisted in the local production of the popular television shows "CSI" and "NCIS" and the recent movies "Faster" and "Drive," among others.

The path to receiving a California on Location Award begins with the nomination process, said Todd Lindgren, Film L.A., Inc spokesman.

"Film commissioners and industry professional nominate individuals and teams based on film, television and commercial production work performed in California," Lindgren said.

"Our city's success in bringing film projects to the community is attributed to the hard work and coordination of our public employees," said Santa Clarita Mayor Marsha McLean.

"The continued efforts of our city staff help bring in extra revenue and contribute to our area's reputation as one of the best places to film on location in the state."