



Jesse Vad / Gothamist (large photo)

Warner Bros. (inset photo)

Tourists and sightseers take photos at the “Joker stairs” in the Bronx.

Inset: Joker, portrayed by Joaquin Phoenix, dances down the stairs as Gary Glitter’s “Rock and Roll Part 2” plays in the background.

No joke: Film, TV sites attract visitors, but not everyone thinks it’s worth it

Thanks to Joaquin Phoenix’s dance moves in “Joker,” the stairs connecting Shakespeare and Anderson Avenues in the Highbridge neighborhood of the Bronx are the most famous set of steps in New York City. They have their own Instagram hashtag with more than 700 tagged photos, and were also added to Google Maps as a “religious site” (the designation has since been removed).

All the attention has frustrated some residents of Highbridge.

“We hope it ends soon because we don’t need this,” said Jonathan Francis, a 29-year-old who has lived in the neighborhood his entire life.

“We feel disrespected.”

Francis said his neighbors now have trouble using the stairs to get to work and school and that some have stopped using them out of fear of appearing in photos.

The Bronx has had a rough reputation, one it’s struggled to shed. Though its associations with arson fires and crime may have lessened in recent years, it’s still not an area many tourists explore, despite being home to the Bronx Zoo, the New York Botanical Gardens and Yankee Stadium.

The Office of The Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr. stated

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Tangipahoa Parish is highlighting its Global Wildlife Center.

Louisiana CVBs seek to ‘swap’ visitors

Two parishes in southeast Louisiana are launching a joint promotion to draw tourists from each other.

Tangipahoa Parish is north-northeast of New Orleans, and Lafourche Parish is southwest of New Orleans.

Now, tourism officials in each parish are encouraging visits from the other. Each has posted suggested itineraries for day-trips or overnight getaways.

Suggested itineraries for Lafourche include the parish’s Cajun Bayou Food Trail.

Tangipahoa Parish is highlighting its Global Wildlife Center, where visitors can hand-feed animals.

The joint effort is called the Explore More campaign, and tourism officials said it was driven in part by a challenge issued by Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser for Louisiana’s tourism entities to find innovative ways to partner with each other.

Source: Washington Post

People have flocked to see “Joker,” which has grossed more than \$1 billion worldwide, resulting in the influx of interest in the stairs.

Film, TV locations attract visitors, but not all work out as planned

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on Twitter that they hope any visitors to the Bronx “decide to spend money while they’re here in our local businesses and vendors.”



Paul Gilmore/NBC

The “Bluff City Law” cast.

An example from television

Memphis economic development officials had high hopes and estimated it would cost \$13.5 million to buy the exposure that Memphis would get in the first 10 episodes of the new NBC legal drama “Bluff City Law.”

The Economic Development Growth Engine of Memphis and Shelby County (EDGE) projected the show would bring in \$1.7 billion in new visitor spending in Memphis. That’s nearly half of all visitor spending in Shelby County in 2018, when 11.8 million people visited the city.

But experts who’ve studied film industry incentives and other observers say EDGE’s estimated impact of “Bluff City Law” may have been vastly overstated.

“Tourism inspired by movies and TV shows is really not something

that can be predicted, let alone relied upon,” said Jon Sanders, an economist with the John Locke Foundation, a conservative think tank in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The argument is moot now.

Producers announced Oct. 17 that shooting will end with the completion of the show’s 10th episode.

“Bluff City Law” has not been officially canceled, however. Producers and fans are campaigning on social media to save the show.

A long-lasting connection

Natchitoches, La., celebrated all things “Steel Magnolias” in November with the Blush & Bashful Weekend (a reference to the color scheme for character Shelby’s wedding).

The movie first premiered in theaters 30 years ago. The movie was shot in Natchitoches in 1988.

“Not a week goes by at the

Natchitoches Convention & Visitors Bureau’s Welcome Center that visitors don’t come in asking about the ‘Steel Magnolias’ movie and wanting to learn more about the movie being filmed here,” said Arlene Gould, Natchitoches CVB executive director, said in a news release.

Julia Roberts plays Shelby in the movie, which also stars Sally Field, Tom Skerritt, Shirley MacLaine, Olympia Dukakis, Dolly Parton and Daryl Hannah.

Events included unveiling of the Natchitoches Film Trail highlighting the points of interest in Natchitoches Parish associated with movie locations and the Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches’ tour of homes and sites used in the movie’s filming.

Sources: Gothamist, CNN, Daily Memphian, Commercial Appeal, KTBS.com, the Advocate



Sally Field and Julia Roberts in a scene from “Steel Magnolias.”