

“Heaven is for Real” movie opens nationwide next week

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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**Actors portraying the Burpo family sit around the kitchen table in a scene from the film.
(Courtesy Photo)**

Film opens in Chase County,

nationwide April 16

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

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In less than a week, the nationwide opening of the “Heaven is for Real” movie arrives.

The fact that the Imperial Theatre is one of the theaters that acquired the film for its opening day release on April 16 is bringing some of the national anticipation to our county.

The nationwide opening, which includes the Imperial Theatre, is Wednesday, April 16.

The Imperial Theatre has two showings scheduled opening night—6 p.m. and 8 p.m. MT—kicking off a total of 10 showings here of the movie based on the best-selling book of the same name released in 2010.

At the center of the story is Colton Burpo of Imperial, now a freshman at Chase County Schools, who as a four-year-old slipped from consciousness during surgery and then, over a period of time, begins telling his parents of his visit to heaven.

The popular book has sold millions of copies and resulted in the later publishing of a devotional and children’s books. The family has toured extensively both in the U.S. and abroad on invitations to tell their story.

The past week, the Burpo family has been spotted on several national programs such as NBC’s “The Today Show” and Mike Huckabee’s show on Fox News touting the release of the movie.

Before leaving last week, Todd Burpo said it’s been a whirlwind, much like after the No. 1 New York Times best-selling book became a hit.

While the movie was not filmed in Imperial, it does portray the community and area well, he has said several times.

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Todd Burpo, who has seen the finished product with his family, said again that the movie portrays Imperial in a very good light.

Enough so, he believes that portrayal will lead people from other parts of the state and country to come here to see the community first-hand.

“Director Randall Wallace has portrayed Imperial in a good manner,” Burpo said last week.

However, since the movie was not filmed here, Imperial will not look the same, he said.

But when the movie DVD is released, people may get a glimpse then of the “real” Imperial.

A Sony film crew was in Imperial mid-March, when they captured the Burpos and community scenes in film taken over about 13 hours, he said.

Burpo said many of those scenes will likely be included in the “extras” that will be placed on the DVD.

Playing the role of Todd in the movie is actor Greg Kinnear, Kelly Reilly plays Sonja, newcomer Connor Corum plays the young Colton, while Lane Styles depicts Cassie.

People can find out more about the “Heaven is for Real” journey at the Burpo family website: www.heavenlive.org.