

RALEIGH, N.C. — The stars over Sylva shine more brightly for the town's leading role in "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri," which took home Academy Awards for best actress (Frances McDormand) and best supporting actor (Sam Rockwell) on Sunday.

Writer-director Martin McDonagh cast the Blue Ridge Mountains town of 2,600 as the main location for his dark comedy about a mother who needles the police about her daughter's unsolved murder. Nearby Dillsboro, Maggie Valley and Black Mountain played supporting roles in the film and in a [trip planner](#) created by Visit North Carolina.

"What Martin saw in Sylva was a perfect Main Street in a classic town that conveyed a sense of closeness," said Guy Gaster, who as director of the North Carolina Film Office spent three days scouting with McDonagh. "Sylva has that authenticity plus the genuine appeal of a small town with three bookstores, two breweries and an Instagram-ready historic courthouse."

"Three Billboards" picked up its first award with its premiere at the Venice Film Festival. The list of honors now includes four Golden Globes, five BAFTAs (the British Academy Awards), three Screen Actors Guild trophies, and dozens of honors from critics, film festivals and other industry groups. Produced on a budget of about \$15 million, the film has tallied more than \$125 million in ticket sales since its release in November.

Filming for "Three Billboards" took place February-June 2016 in Jackson, Buncombe and Haywood counties and created more than 350 job opportunities for talent and crew. The direct in-state spend was \$12.6 million.

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