

Southern Regional featured in new Jennifer Lopez movie

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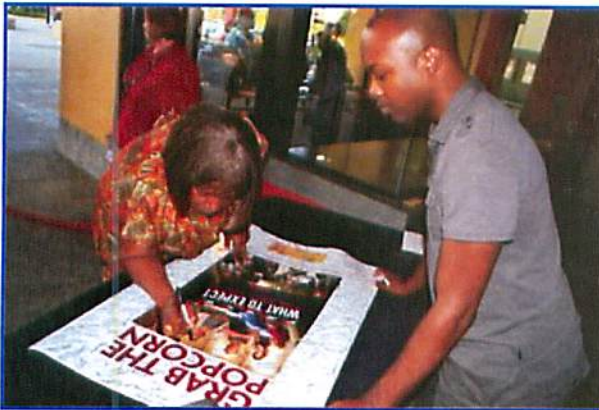


Photo by Curt Yeomans Southern Regional Medical Center Respiratory Therapist Barbara Sall signs a "What to Expect When You're Expecting" movie poster for hospital spokesman Justin Cooper on Friday before a screening of the film at AMC Southlake movie theater, in Morrow. Part of the movie was filmed at the hospital.

In a way, the new film, "What to Expect When You're Expecting," is sort of like "When Southern Regional met a Charlie's Angel and Jenny from the Block."

Riverdale-based Southern Regional Medical Center is currently sharing the big screen with Cameron Diaz, Jennifer Lopez, Chris Rock and Dennis Quaid in the baby-themed film. The movie, which was directed by Kirk Jones and produced by Lionsgate, Alcon Entertainment, Phoenix Pictures and What to Expect Productions, opened in theaters across the country this past Friday.

At the end of the film, which takes place in Atlanta, characters played by Diaz, Quaid, Matthew Morrison, Brooklyn Decker, Elizabeth Banks and Ben Falcone, went to Southern Regional (which played itself) to

welcome their children into their world. Lopez's character adopted an Ethiopian baby, and did not have any scenes at the hospital.



Photo by Curt Yeomans Southern Regional Medical Center spokesperson Claudia Hall (right) chats with community officials and

The hospital may not pull a diva act any time soon, and as a building, it is certainly not likely to walk a red carpet anytime soon.

It is a newly minted movie star, however.

"It was great to see the hospital on screen," said Southern Regional President Jim Crissey. "As I watched it, I was thinking it characterized the excellence of health care that we have here in the Southern Crescent."

Southern Regional officials celebrated the opening of the movie last Friday with a special screening for hospital employees and "Very Important Persons" at the AMC Southlake Movie Theater in Morrow. Approximately 350 doctors, hospital staff, elected officials and community

City of Morrow leaders on Friday, after a screening of the film "What to Expect When You're Expecting," at AMC Southlake movie theater, in Morrow. Part of the movie was filmed at the hospital.



Photo by Curt Yeomans Southern Regional Medical Center staff, and community officials make their way down a miniature red carpet outside AMC Southlake movie theater, in Morrow, on Friday for a screening of "What to Expect When You're Expecting." Part of the movie was filmed at Southern Regional.

leaders crowded into two rooms at the theater to be among the first people to watch the film.

And, even though the movie featured a plethora of stars, it was Southern Regional itself that was the main attraction for audience members. It ended up being the setting for roughly the final 20 minutes of the film. As each set of expectant parents pulled into the hospital's parking lot, audience members applauded and cheered as its front facade, including the words "Southern Regional Medical Center," came on screen.

Staff members from the hospital's Respiratory Therapy unit were especially tickled by the final scenes because it was their department that doubled as the hospital's maternity ward.

"I kept picking out different parts of the hospital," said an excited respiratory therapist Barbara Sall as she walked out of the theater. "We were pinpointing everything we saw from our department. I was like 'That's our sign! That's our work desk!'"

In addition to the hospital retaining its name in the movie, it also retained many other elements of its identity, including its branding and marketing identification. Extras who portrayed hospital staff even wore their own authentic Southern Regional identification badges, which came complete with the hospital's logo, in the movie.

"We provided them with all of our logos, and everything they needed to make it as authentic as possible," said Southern Regional spokesperson Claudia Hall, who added "What To Expect When You're Expecting" was one of six movies filmed at the hospital in the last year.

She added that while Southern Regional doctors were not used on screen, they did provide the film crew and actors with their own technical expertise behind the

camera.

The hospital was chosen because of its proximity to Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and because it had a parking lot big enough for the film crew to set up their trucks in, according to Tamara Patridge, a location scout for the Clayton County Film Office. She added crew members appreciated the willingness of hospital staff to cooperate, and work with the crew.

"I heard from the movie's director that he absolutely loved working at the hospital because the staff made it a fantastic experience," Patridge said. "Anytime there was a change in the script, the hospital was willing to work with the film crew to accommodate those changes."

Sall said the film's crew filmed the movie in the respiratory therapy unit while staff continued to treat patients as usual. She admitted that sometimes staff did have to occasionally take alternative routes to get around the filming, to answer calls, but she added that it provided no major hassles.

Joe Baker, Southern Regional's vice-president of facilities and engineering services, said "it took a lot of coordination" between hospital staff and members of the film crew, but they were able to make sure patient care went uninterrupted during filming of the movie.

"The director would stop shooting, and let our doctors do their jobs, if we had an emergency," Baker said. "Patient care was first on the minds of everyone at all times."