

*September 2004
Frederick News-Post*

Documentary: 9/11 hero
By Erin Cunningham



FREDERICK- Russ Hodge knows his cousin's story well, the story of an off-duty New York City firefighter who ran more than a mile to reach the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

It's the story of Stephen Siller, who died with 347 other first responders that day. Mr. Hodge and his Frederick-based production company, Three Roads Productions, soon will put the final touches on a documentary, "For The Love Their Brother," about Mr. Siller and the annual Tunnel to Tower Run. The Sept. 26 run traces Mr. Siller's path from the Battery Park Tunnel to the Twin Towers. The documentary will air on public television in mid-2005. But Mr. Hodge said there is still a lot of shooting left to do. Producers hope to have much of it done by the end of the year.



Staff photo by Saul Stoopenske
The production staff at Three Roads productions stands by a screen shot of their recently produced documentary, "For The Love Of Their Brother," set to air on PBS next year.

Mr. Hodge said part of the message is Mr. Siller's family, who created the Stephen Siller FDNY "Let Us Do Good" Children's Foundation.

“All of these regular people got together and did this beautiful memorial to this great guy, and every nickel of the money goes to charity,” Mr. Hodge said, referring to the foundation.

About four months ago, Mr. Hodge said he contacted public television executives and asked if they would be interested in a documentary about Mr. Siller and the 5K run. He said they saw the same thing he did: a story of tragedy and triumph. “What interested me ... what was so beautiful about this story was that they took something so awful, and they could have been so angry and let it destroy them,” he said. “But they banded together and managed to do this.”

Mr. Hodge and other producers arrived in New York days before the run. They interviewed friends, family members and fire service personnel.

He said as the runners lined up to begin the fund-raiser they resembled a “sea of people.”

While Mr. Hodge has been in business for 11 years, he said he was affected most by this piece. Instead of a time of mourning or sadness, people were glad to spend their day remembering and raising funds for children.

“It was very patriotic. It’s not a sad event,” he said. “There’s nobody mashing their teeth or crying out for revenge. It is people gathering to raise money for charity.”

It was in the most unexpected places that the story came to light. A fire chief, who Mr. Hodge said spoke often about 9/11, was moved to tears during an interview. “It’s just waves of emotion,” he said. “Most of these people come to honor someone they never knew and do good at the same time.”

Mr. Hodge said Three Roads had to raise some money to cover the expenses of travel, but the documentary will be given to stations free of charge.