



Progress photo by Brad Armstrong

Cowboys Dale Husband, Scott Modzelenski, Bradley Reed, Rowlland Sones and Ken Mantel all hope to be picked as one of 20 cowboys to be used in international advertisements. The search continues in Scottsdale today and will move around Arizona until the middle of next week.

Searching for Most Western Cowboy

By Joan McKenna
Progress Staff Writer

"Cattle call" has been the somewhat tongue-in-cheek name associated with acting tryouts for years.

But Scottsdale producers are rounding up more than the average herd of beefcake. They're looking for the West's Most Western cowboy to do advertisements around the world.

Jean-clad hunks of all makes and models have been heading to Producers Network, 3811 N. Brown Ave., this week to be videotaped and interviewed in their finest hats and boots.

Word went out to local talent agencies, ranches, roping schools and Western tourist attractions that anyone 25 to 48, 5-foot-10 or taller, with a strong build, strong jaw, rugged good looks and the ability to ride a horse could be a candidate in the national search.

"They're trying to put together a stable of 20 men that they can use in different markets," said Gay Gilbert, owner of Producers Network, who is coordinating auditions in Arizona for the Annie Hamilton Casting Co. of Los Angeles.

Those 20 lucky guys will receive year-long contracts to do billboards, print ads and European TV commercials for what Gilbert called "lucrative" monetary benefits.

Payment for each assignment will depend on what the model does, she said. Scale pay for an actor is \$416 a day, but if he rides a horse he will receive more.

Gilbert expects at least 400 guys to try out across the state. She will be in Scottsdale through today, then in Tucson on Friday, followed by Tombstone, Douglas and Prescott.

By noon Wednesday, she already had videotaped more than 40 men, including Mike Kevill, a Cave Creek horse trainer who acts and models part time and has had speaking parts in the television show *Young Riders*.

Kevill owns 10 acres of land in Cave Creek and makes a business of taking on other people's problem horses. He said a year-long contract for commercials would not create conflicts with that operation.

Even if he's called away for a couple of days, "I know the boss," Kevill said.

Cowboy Vance Johnson, sporting well-worn chaps over his jeans Wednesday, laughed in agreement. The Tucson photographer, who doubles as an actor and stunt rider, frequently takes off to do jobs in California.

His most recent film was *City Slickers*, a bit of a rough assignment, as he broke his finger during the bull-run scene. He

also worked in *Young Guns II* and *Firebirds*.

Forty finalists will be called back for additional tryouts, only this time with a horse. They will be taken to a Scottsdale ranch and given a chance to show their stuff in the saddle, plus rope in they know how.

This is the second year in a row for the cowboy search. A Prescott blacksmith was the only Arizona cowboy chosen last year. He mainly did "parts" modeling, or hand modeling, Gilbert said. He since has returned to Prescott.

It's anybody's guess what look will win this year, she added. Sometimes clients just react to something they see, not necessarily a preconceived picture. Gilbert is a veteran of casting calls, having formerly worked as an agent in Los Angeles. She moved to Scottsdale nine years ago.

"Once in a while, somebody comes in here that will have that something special — an energy — and you know it's right," she said. "I always see people because you never know."

There are about 3,000 actors in Arizona, Gilbert estimated. Add in a few thousand dude riders, roping instructors and jeep tour drivers, plus the thousands of ranch hands in the area, and sounds like a pretty big cowboy herd.