

THE WHEATLAND ROUNDUP

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EARLY'S SEED AND FEED COMING TO LITTLE BIG TOWN

News that Early's Seed and Feed is coming to town has spread faster than Covid-19. The company is expanding from the big city of Saskatoon and has had its eye on Little Big Town for awhile. News of the new sheriff has put the company at ease and helped them make the expansion official. "We always thought Little Big Town was the perfect spot for another location but we were always a little concerned with the rumors of the Blackjacks and Smokin' Aces in the area. Now that Sheriff Jenkins is around, we feel better about having our business out there." Says Mr. Early, founder of Early's Seed and Feed. Little Big Town needed a feed and seed store for quite some time as most people have had to hook up the wagon and travel for miles on bumpy dirt roads and only haul what the horses can pull.



The Wheatland Round-Up went out to talk to the people of Little Big Town to get their reaction to the news, and unbelievably we had not one complaint. Even Merv, the mortician, was happy about the Early's coming to town, saying, "Heck, I think it is great, they don't hurt my business any, in fact, I think it will bring more people to town, which helps my business." The most excited to hear the news was town green-thumb, Hadley Berry. "I just can't wait till they open up shop here. My flower beds and garden will be getting bigger this year, that is for sure." The town sure is excited about the expansion of business to the town, and hopefully, Early's will attract a few more businesses to set up shop in Little Big Town.



NOBLE NOTATION

Water Water

Written by Bill Noble

Water is an absolute necessity for every aspect of our existence, and the location and use of water is vital. As the railways pushed across Western Canada, supplies of suitable water governed all operations. Steam locomotives consume vast quantities of water. Railways preferred to have a good water supply every 30 or so miles along the line. A small engine will use about 50 Imperial gallons of water per mile (140 liters per kilometer). This number can rise dramatically depending on factors such as engine size, train length, hilly country, and colder temperatures. For an engine to run out of water is not simply an inconvenience, it is fatal. An uncovered crown sheet of an engine firebox will overheat, soften, and split in seconds, causing the boiler to explode like a huge bomb. Running out of water is not an option.

Moreover, the water had to be of very high quality. Locomotives are very picky drinkers. As the water in the boiler is evaporated to steam and used, very little dissolved material is carried over and blown up the stack. Silt, salts, alkalis, and other chemicals remain in the boiler and concentrate rapidly. The same scale is causing chemicals that we in Saskatchewan love in our taps, toilets, and kettles set to work on boiler tubes, bolts, rivets, and joints. There are particularly insidious chemicals that can cause the water in the boiler to foam as it boils, turning the water from clear to milky to something approaching cottage cheese. This unhappy occurrence results in the engine being taken out of service and having its boiler and mechanism disassembled, cleaned, and rebuilt. Poor quality water costs the railways enormous quantities of time, effort, and money.

From their beginnings, the railways searched for and created suitable water. Miles of pipe were laid as water from lakes, rivers, and springs were collected. Wells were sunk, but all too often, such water contained the chemicals that caused scaling or foaming. Dams, large and small, were built and dugouts



excavated to collect rainwater and snowmelt. One of the largest of such undertakings was built at Melville, Saskatchewan, in 1921. A large earth dam and dugout with a capacity of 225,000,000 gallons was constructed, with 4 kilometers of 8-inch iron pipe laid to deliver the precious supply. In addition, the railways had fleets of dozens of 8000 and 10000-gallon "On Company Service" tank cars that were constantly in use, hauling untold quantities of water to supply lines where no suitable water was available. It was, in short, a big deal and remained so right up to the end of steam operations.

Even with such mighty efforts, great care was still required constantly. Chemicals to "soften" the water and counteract the harmful dissolved salts and alkalis were added to bulk water supplies. Blocks to counteract scaling and foaming were added each time the tender was filled. At least once each day, locomotive crews "blew down" the engine by opening large taps on the bottom of the boiler to blast out sludge and silt. Every thirty days, each locomotive was taken out of service and had its boiler drained and flushed with clean water. A big deal, indeed.

Our Wheatland Rail line, originally the Cudworth Subdivision of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, was built between 1910 and 1917. There was a water tower at Totzke, built in 1911, and water was taken from the rivers at St. Louis and Prince Albert, but for many years, the majority of the line relied on water tank cars. In the late 1920s, Canadian National Railways built a branch line from Aberdeen to Melfort. The newer line crossed our existing Cudworth Sub on a diamond in the southern outskirts of Wakaw. As part of this new construction, CNR erected a standard 60,000 Imperial gallon enclosed water tank as well as

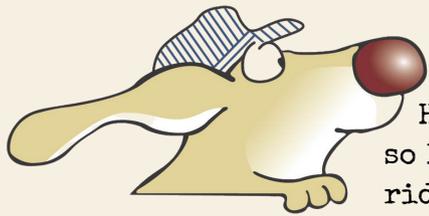
two accompanying standpipe hydrants to serve adjacent tracks. The tank drew its water from a well located about 2 kilometers south. Fortune smiled on the enterprise because the well provided a plentiful supply of locomotive-suitable water. The well and two-kilometer pipe still exist today, as evidenced by a green stripe across the lawn of a present-day landowner. Although the pipe is now breaking down and leaking, it still provides water after almost a century in the ground.

As can be seen in the accompanying photo of a typical tank, these structures were imposing. Like the prairie grain elevator, these water towers were a distinctive feature of the Canadian landscape. The 50-foot tall tower enclosed the tank, raised up on its heavy timber support frame and a stove to prevent freezing in our harsh winters. The ball on the rooftop mast was connected to a float in the tank and showed how much water is in the tank. As can be seen in the photo, this tank is almost

right full. Each water tank on the railway had a full-time employee whose job it was to ensure that his tank did not run dry. The "tankman" lived near to the water tank and could be summoned any time, day or night, by the wail of a steam locomotive whistle to come immediately and fix any problem. It was vital that the tank did not run dry. The photo also tells another story. The train, a CNR branch line passenger train, shows evidence of having pushed through or been pulled from, some serious snowdrifts. In any event, the occurrence will have left the locomotive tender low on water. The first stop is the nearest water tank.

The foundation of the Wakaw tank is still there - just to the East of our tracks. The 30-foot diameter building foundation with its twelve concrete tank support blocks is just one of several historic features that we at the Wheatland Express love to show off. Come ride with us and have a look.





SPIKES SAFETY SCOOP

Hey everyone, I'm Spike the Safety Dog! Since the weather is so lovely, I thought I would pull my bike out and take it for a ride. I love to ride my bike, but I make sure I am always safe. I always wear a helmet when I'm riding my bike and that I'm cautious of my surroundings. It is especially important to be aware when you are crossing railroad tracks. Only cross the tracks at designated railroad crossings and when crossing, get off and walk your bike across. The saying I always go by is STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN, since it is the safest way to get across the tracks at crossings. I can't wait to go ride my bike! I have been waiting all winter to ride my bike. I think I will bet the conductor some biscuits I can beat him in a bike race today. I hope I win. Biking always gets me hungry for some treats!



-Spike the safety dog

HELP SPIKE MATCH THE OBJECT TO IT'S SHADOW



GSR 2018



Today GSR 2018 is used as our “on-board classroom” for the Canadian Safety Train Express as well as utilized on the Wheatland Express excursions experience. The car was built in January 1954 by American Car Foundry as a sleeper car numbered UP 4585. In February 1966, Union Pacific rebuilt the car into a 44-seat long-distance coach and renumbered to UP 5545 and named “Alpine Grove.” The car continued to operate in New York and Pennsylvania, USA.



Amtrak purchased the car in 1973 and used until the car was retired in October 1981. It was not until 2018, that the car was purchased by Great Sandhills Railway and renumbered GSR 2018. This car came to our line from New Orleans, Louisiana USA, and had sustained massive water damage and had to be completely remodeled to reach its present state for everyone to enjoy today. Above are some pictures of GSR 2018 before renovations and below is after.



EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Kate Bestland

Born: The Pas, MB

Currently Reside: Saskatoon, SK

Work History: Medical Lab Assistant for Norman Regional Health Authority 4 years, Currently Wheatland Express Safety Trains Program Manager

Favorite Movie: Good Fellas

Favorite Sports Team: Toronto Blue Jays

Favorite Wheatland railcar: The new railcars GSR 6120 and GSR 6122

Did you know: Kate's nickname is Karaoke Kate as she is an excellent performer and singer.



OPERATIONS UPDATE



Wheatland Express Safety Train

The Canadian Safety Train Express has had incredible success with the launch of our online railway safety presentations using ZOOM and Google Classroom. As of March 12th, 2021, we have completed over 16 presentations and educated over 300 students! The teachers' positive feedback has not only been constructive, but it has been encouraging for our program and its educators. We have recently introduced an incentive program where we send an email with our review form after the presentation. If the teacher fills out the form and sends it back, we send them a gift certificate for the Wheatland Express Excursion Train! Providing these presentations has indeed been a fun and rewarding way for our program to educate our target audience and know that we are making a difference.

spring storage earlier than first expected. We could be up to 300 cars by the end of March.

We have added another person this month to the GSR group. Tyler Bontheau has joined us and will be helping in several areas including track maintenance and work around the new passenger cars Scott Opseth will also be joining us at the end of the month to help service our maintenance equipment and passenger cars. These great additions will bring us up to 11 full-time employees at the Cudworth facility and does not include the contractor help we get.

We have submitted a maintenance plan for this season that would see us install more ties, do some track surfacing, and some weed/brush cutting along the line. We would also like to upgrade the old fertilizer shed in Cudworth and make it more usable.



Wheatland Express Learning Centre

The development of the Learning Center is well underway, and we are now installing the sound system in the rail cars that will house the exhibits. One exhibit that we are extremely excited about is the Round Theatre. This theatre has a 360° screen which is equipped with surround sound and high-definition screens. The theatre will be in a rail car of its own and show different educational videos about railway safety. The videos will range from 2-10 minutes and can be placed on a loop for bigger crowds to educate more people. As we wrap up year one of the learning center development, we are very excited to start our second year and see what 2021-2022 has to offer!



Wheatland Charities Inc.

We are gearing up for the summer tour season here at Wheatland Charities. One way we money for different community programs is through the Wheatland Express Train Heist Excursion. This is one of the most popular tours and is always a great time had by all. Guests are encouraged to keep their eyes peeled for Justice Jed and the Blackjack Gang while they are riding down the rails as they are sure to make an appearance and "rob" the train. All proceeds collected from the robbery are donated to local charities and always appreciated.

In other charity news, we are happy to report Cinnamon, the foster dog from February's Round-Up issue has found her forever home. She now lives with a Great Pyrenees and we are told she has settled in nicely. We are all proud of Karen for being such a good foster mom and getting Cinnamon ready for her future. Along with Cinnamon, we have also adopted out two horses from the Wheatland Racehorse Retirement Association. Pushy and Squirrel were both able to be re-homed and have very bright futures ahead of them with their new owners. You might even get to meet Squirrel this summer as one of our bandits' mounts.



Great Sandhills Railway

Warmer weather was a welcome sight at the end of the month.

Snow continued to be a problem in certain spots, but a couple of trips by the snow fighter cleaned that up. We have seen an increased interest in



Wheatland Express Excursion Train

The past month has flown by quicker than ever! Last month, we welcomed a new employee to our team. A warm

welcome to Haley, who comes to us with over 24 years of experience with the former Radisson Hotel (Marriott) in Saskatoon! Our guests will have the pleasure to speak to Haley when booking their tickets.

We've continued to work on our development projects and preparing for the

return to tours. It has been a joy hearing from our guests again as inquiries and bookings pick up in anticipation for the summer! While our opening date remains unclear, we are optimistic and ready to roll!

Now we set our sights on Rendez-vous Canada, the premier Canadian tourism show scheduled May 15-17, we look forward to representing Saskatchewan to the domestic and international travel trade markets.

We can't wait to see you onboard soon!

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

HOW TIMBIT SEE'S IT

Neigh there. I am Timbit, a reporter for the Wheatland Round-Up my job is to keep the folks of Little Big Town updated to the goings-on on all things four-legged. We have added a new member to the herd out here at the ranch, so I thought we would talk to him today.

"Hi Jerry, how are you liking things at the ranch here so far?"

"Hey, I like it here. The other horses all seem pretty nice."

"Want to tell the people a little about yourself?"

"Sure, I am a 17-year young Percheron cross. I love treats and to take people on rides with a sleigh or wagon."

"How do you like your new partner Tommy?"

"Well, at first, I was a little worried as he was pretty bossy, but once I told him I was here to be his new partner, not replace him, he has warmed right up to me. However, he seems to be more concerned about his stomach than anything. When those girls come with the food, he throws his weight around. I just hope he will be throwing his half of the weight when it comes time to work."

"How do you like the food around here?"

"I love the food. I do have one complaint though. I would really like to have a bit more oats added at supper time."

"At least you get oats, they tell me I can't have any, and I am on a diet. The people at Early's Farm and Garden suggested I get some kind of no fat pellet, so I don't feel left out while you guys get the good stuff."

"I see that you get something different, but it must not taste too bad as you have it ate all up in 2 seconds flat. Also, I'm not trying to be mean, but you are as wide as you are tall."

It doesn't taste that bad but not as good as the oats you get. I am trying to get fat. I eat my food plus steal from Gigi the goat and Hazel the sheep. I hope that if I get round enough, they won't be able to fit a saddle on me anymore, be ridden is hard work. I would rather just do my reporting job."



"I bet! I have never been ridden, but I have worked at the museum in North Battleford and parades all over the province, and I love my job. I can't wait to work on this Wheatland express everyone keeps telling me about."

"Yes, it is going to be a great summer both here at the ranch and out working on the Excursion Train."



2021 WHEATLAND EXPRESS SCHEDULE

Wheatland Express is committed to re-opening as soon as conditions permit us to do so. Here's a glimpse of what we have planned for you so far in 2021! Had tickets for 2020? Your tickets are valid for rescheduled tour dates. Ticket holders can expect to receive an e-mail from us with event updates and options if they cannot make the 2021 date.

JUNE

- 05 - David James & Big River - Johnny Cash Tribute Excursion & Dinner Show
- 06 - Prairie Train Heist Excursion
- 13 - Murder on the Wheatland Express Excursion
- 20 - Father's Day Prairie Train Heist Excursion
- 26 - Family Summer Express Excursion
- 27 - Excursion TBD



JULY

- 03 - Prairie Train Heist Excursion
- 10 - Cowboy Showdown & Country Cookout Excursion
- 11 - Murder on the Wheatland Express Excursion
- 17 - Eagles Tribute Excursion & Dinner Show
- 18 - Prairie Train Heist Excursion
- 25 - Family Summer Express Excursion

AUGUST

- 08 - Prairie Train Heist Excursion
- 22 - Murder on the Wheatland Express Excursion
- 28 - CCR Reprisal - CCR Tribute Excursion & Dinner Show
- 29 - Family Summer Express Excursion



STAY TUNED FOR ADDED DATES, TOURS
AND TRAVEL OFFERS!

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