

OCTOBER 2021 | VOL.12

# THE WHEATLAND ROUNDUP

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## HAUNTINGS ABOARD THE WHEATLAND EXPRESS



This month, reports have come in that Maximillian Wheatland is going off the rails! The people of Little Big town have reported hearing Max panic about his train, the Wheatland Express, being haunted. None of the folks of the town believe his stories but Max insists that he will have to shut down the train if the horrors he is witnessing continue.

“It truly is starting to scare me” Max states. “One day, I was on my train preparing to take some folks on a little train ride. Now keep in mind, I was all alone... All of the sudden, I heard a loud bang. Thinkin’ there was something wrong with my engine I started to head on over to investigate. Then came a loud screaming sound that didn’t sound anything like the people of this town. I got my behind outta that train as fast as I could. Next day when I went back, mind you

I really didn’t want to be back, there was nothin’ wrong with my engine and nothin’ that could’ve explained what I heard. It really is troubling me that no one will believe me. This has happened more than once too!”

Now, the re-elected Mayor of Little Big Town promised more tourism to this town and the Wheatland Express plays a huge role in that. He can’t have the train shut down for any reason! “I promise y’all that the train will be runnin’ this season. Let’s just all give Max some space for a while and by the end of the month, the Wheatland Express will be all set to go for more end of year excursions!” the mayor responds.

The mayor was indeed able to convince Max to go ahead with his excursions planned for the last week of October.

The only reason he agreed was the hope that others would see the same things he had and believe that he wasn't going crazy.

Sure enough, during the excursions, the guests reported being very uneasy and most saw some terrifying things!

"I guess Maximillian was right! When I was on the train a cold feeling rushed over me and I felt a hand on my shoulder. When I turned around, no one was there. Unless something changes I refuse to go anywhere near the train again!" says one frightened guest.

Another states "Yes, I was on the last excursion, and I can assure you, there is



definitely something wrong with that train. Like others, I remember it being oddly cold in the car. The part that scared me the most was when I was on my way to the diner car, I moved out of the way to let someone pass by me but after they passed they disappeared."

Luckily, Little Big Town's very own Hazel Star knows a thing or two about spirits and hauntings. She has agreed to visit the train with Max and deal with the issue head on.

"There is no need to be frightened. I am very good at what I do and promise I will fix this issue with the Wheatland Express! It takes some time and effort, but the train will be back and running by the Christmas season for everyone to enjoy it once again!" Hazel announced to the town.



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## EMPLOYEE PROFILE

**Name:** Haley Beswick

**Born:** February 14th

**Currently Reside:** Saskatoon

**Work History:** Worked at the Delta hotel (formerly Radisson Hotel) for 24 years before joining the Wheatland team!

**Favorite Movie:** Drumline

**Favorite Sports:** Jamaica Track and Field

**Favorite Wheatland railcar:** GSR 2021 and GSR 2022

**Did you know:** Haley has worked on almost every excursion this season!

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# NOBLE NOTATION

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## GIANTS ON THE HORIZON

Written by Bill Noble

They are an endangered species. Once they were all around us and were known far and wide as proud and iconic symbols of Saskatchewan. Now their ranks are dwindling as the business of handling grain to feed the world has been taken over by a far smaller number of inland terminals. True, the modern terminals are much more efficient; Scaled and positioned to fit into today's industrial B-train-truck and railway-grain-hopper-car operation. But we miss the cozy, local charm of the classic wooden grain elevator.

In the beginning of the prairie grain business, the Canadian Pacific Railway established trackside-loading platforms where farmers could load grain into boxcars - either in 100-pound sacks or shoveled directly into the car. The CPR recognized the need for a more efficient grain handling system but did not have the finances to establish such an organization on its own. As ideas for how to handle the grain developed, the CPR approached several grain and milling businesses, offering low cost, long term leases on trackside property in exchange for the grain companies building and operating their own loading facilities - and ultimately loading networks. The simple fact that grain can flow like a liquid lead to an elegant solution. By combining a system for lifting - elevating - the grain with bins that could store the grain and move it under the force of gravity, the elevator was born.

The first purpose-built elevator was constructed by Lake of the Woods Milling Company at Fleming, in what would become Saskatchewan, in 1895. It was not alone for long. The Western Canadian immigration boom



of the early 20th century brought thousands of farm families to the Western prairies. The railways, at first the CPR and then rivals Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific (these two would ultimately form Canadian National Railways) laid down a web of branch lines with towns (and elevators) 10 miles apart. From the small beginning at Fleming, the pace of elevator construction grew until 1933, when the number of elevators in Saskatchewan peaked at 5758. The number declined slowly until the early 1950s when there were just over 3000. Today, there are fewer than 200 and many of those are dilapidated. Happily, there are preservation efforts underway in a number of places.

Large and imposing though they are, wooden elevators were relatively straightforward to construct. The tall lower section, which was comprised of the tall, narrow storage bins, was built from 2 x 6 planks laid flat and nailed on top of each other with the corners securely interlocked. Huge numbers of long nails were used. The smaller top piece, which contained the top of the elevating mechanism and the pipes to distribute the grain among the many bins, was simpler stud-and-siding construction. Construction was fast. After the concrete foundation was in place, travelling construction crews of 18-20 men could build an elevator in as little as two weeks. With the application of a coat of (usually) red

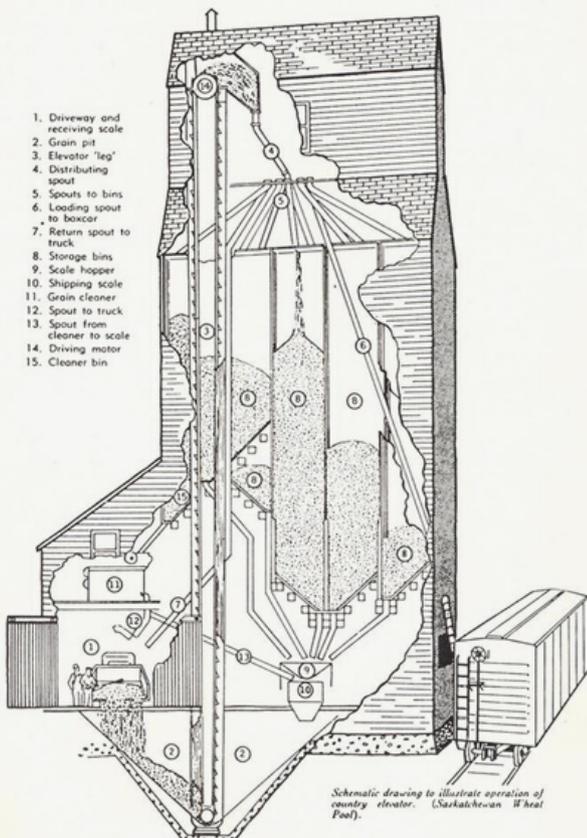
oxide paint and white lettering (including the town name) the elevator was ready for customers. This latter feature permitted elevators to provide an unheralded service during the Second World War. Saskatchewan was the location of a large number of Air Force flying training airfields. While the huge expanse of the province was a perfect training area, it was also an easy place to become lost. Untold numbers of fledgling aviators, confused in their map reading, followed a simple rule. Fly in a straight line until you spot a railway track and then follow the track to the next town where the town name was written in three-foot high letters.

The operation of the elevator was elegantly simple. Farmers drove their wagon or truck into a covered unloading area where the grain was inspected and the loaded vehicle

was weighed. Then a lift tilted the truck and the grain was dumped through a grate in the floor into the "pit" or "boot", a hopper at the very bottom of the elevator. Finally, the empty truck was re-weighed to calculate the amount of grain delivered. Then, the elevating began. At the heart of the elevator was the "leg", a wooden box that contained an endless fabric belt that looped all the way from the bottom of the boot to the top of the building. A large number of open topped metal cups, roughly the size and shape of bread pans, was attached to the belt. Driven by the elevator's engine, the moving cups rapidly emptied the boot and lifted the grain to the top where it was deposited into the "gerber", a carousel-like arrangement of pipes that permitted the grain to be dumped into the appropriate bin where it awaited the next step.

Shipping the accumulated grain out of the elevator was, once again, elegantly simple. Chutes at the bottom of each storage bin allowed grain to flow (the magic of gravity) from the selected bin down to the boot. Again the grain sped up the leg to the gerber where it was directed back down to a hopper adjacent to the railway track. After each trackside hopper load was weighed, the grain was elevated for the final time, being dropped into a delivery pipe that shot the grain into a boxcar. This process allowed boxcars to be evenly loaded with a minimum of hand shoveling. On average, a total of 22 trackside hopper loads were required to fill a boxcar.

Prairie elevators were the heart of the small prairie towns, lending certain panache. For a small boy, they were a source of pride - "Gosh, that town only has four elevators. In Girvin we've got six". One of those was my Dad's - he was an agent for the Searle Grain Company. I remember watching

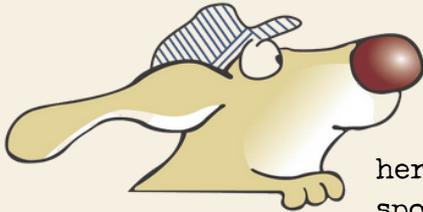


Schematic drawing to illustrate operation of country elevator. (Saskatchewan Wheat Pool).

Figure 1. Schematic drawing illustrating a primary elevator operation.

the ritual of weighing and dumping the trucks - "Stay behind the scale out of the way" - as the back corners of the truck box were shoveled and swept. And I remember watching from the safety of the stairs that lead down to the engine room in the office as my Dad started the big (the flywheels were as tall as me) Ruston and Hornsby single

cylinder engine with shots of compressed air. I remember the sound as a slow puff, puff became a busy BOINK, BOINK, BOINK, the unusual exhaust note caused by the very tall steel exhaust pipe. I remember and I still enjoy as I drive around seeing the few remaining elevators standing guard on our horizon. They are giants, indeed.



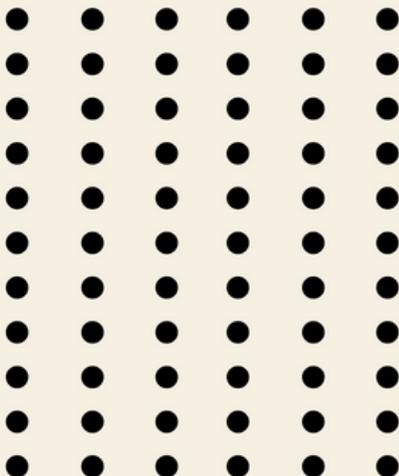
## SPIKES SPOOKY SAFETY SCOOP

Hi boys and girls! It's me again, Spike the safety dog! Halloween is here, and I am sooooo excited for all of the candy and costumes! Since it's spooky season I wanted to tell you all a scary train fact. Did you know that there is such a thing as ghost trains? They aren't quite as scary as they sound. In some parts of the world they run empty trains (ghost trains) with no people in them through abandoned train stations so that the stations don't need to be shut down. But just because they are empty trains doesn't mean they are different from any other train! It's important that we always remember our train safety rules around every train or railroad we are around! Remember to never play on or around railway tracks, even if you are ghost train hunting, because that is trespassing! Always use railway crossings if you need to get across the tracks. Finally, remember to always STOP, LOOK and LISTEN before crossing the train tracks! I'm going to go trick or treating with my friend Gainer now. I can't wait for all of the treats I'm going to eat tonight! Happy Halloween everyone!

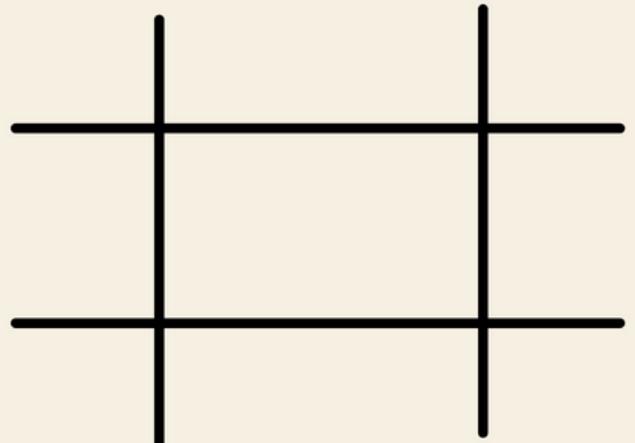


-Spike the safety dog

Play either one of Spike's favourite games



Dots and Boxes



Tic Tac Toe

# OPERATIONS UPDATE

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## Wheatland Express Safety Train

After our success at rail safety week, we are very excited to have classes coming back for a day on the train at our mobile classroom! Along with our presentation, the students are able to use our iPads to make "Spike come to life" on our augmented reality app! We also have our Railway Safety Activity books available, 2 large touch screen tv's for hands on activities pertaining to railway safety and of course we have Spike the Safety Dog come to every class out at the train! We have had very positive feedback from both the students and teachers that attend our classes and are excited to keep on educating members of our target audience on the train itself!



## Wheatland Express Learning Centre

The Learning Center continues its construction and production of our many exhibits. After the positive feedback from the recent unveiling of our 2 exhibits, all aboard and the danger map, we continue to work with Mammoth and Evolution to create the rest of our planned exhibits. In the recent distribution of our 2021-2022 Railway Safety Activity books, we included a page explaining the Learning Center and what it will have to offer- we hope everyone is as excited as we are!



## Great Sandhills Railway

We have continued preparing for winter. This past month we have completed mowing along the right of way from one end of the line to the other. It has never looked so good! We are adding a hot start to the 5543 to eliminate the need to operate the locomotives during the night during cold weather. The hot start serves the same purpose as a block heater in a vehicle. We are shipping grain again this month off the line and there has been some renewed interest from other shippers to do the same. The Western town continues to develop with the Saloon, the latest building starting to take shape. After it is complete, we are down to the final two buildings, a fur type trading house, and the Dentist/Doctor's Office. The folks building town have done an outstanding job exceeding expectations at every turn. We have increased our staff to 16 that work out of Cudworth maintenance centre. We have another 9 full time folks that are involved in the operation of the Safety and Wheatland excursion train.





## Wheatland Express Excursion Train

Wheatland Express welcomed onboard Melissa Gagnon, Liz Pegueros and Adele Leduc to our amazing team. Excitement and suspense are in the air as we prepare for our Halloween Ghost escape trains on October 29 and 30. The kids will also have a blast on the Family Halloween Train on October 31.

As October comes to a close our next big adventure is getting ready for Agribition in Regina in November. We are looking forward to this amazing show and to seeing everyone coming together again for the first time since the pandemic. All aboard!



START A NEW  
*Holiday Tradition*  
WITH  
**THE WHEATLAND EXPRESS**  
Magical Christmas Express running December 4th,  
5th, 11th, 12th 18th, 19th

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# 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. It's Halloween season at the farm and I thought I'd get into the spirt by dressing up as our favorite giants, Tommy and Jerry! With the help of Danica, I'm finally ready to go see what the boys think of my costume.

Hey guys, check me out! Can you guess who I'm dressed up as?

"Are you dressed up like us?" Asked Jerry.

"You'd look just like us if you grew a few feet." Added Tommy.

Yep, I sure am! Did you see I even put on a red collar? I look just like you guys when you go work on excursions!

"Yes! Now you just need to get a cart so you can come along with us." Said Jerry.

"I don't know about that.. I think if you came with us all the people would give you their treats instead of me!" Tommy said.

Maybe next season. Do you two have any plans for Halloween?

"I think we should go trick or treating around Little Big Town." Answers Tommy.

"Don't you think you get enough treats, Tommy?" Asks Jerry.

"You can never have too many treats!!

Maybe I'll dress up as Timbit." Says Tommy.

If you try to shrink down to my size then you'll really have to cut back on all the food!

"You're right. Hey, maybe I'll dress up as a round-bale. Those are my favorite meal and I'm closer to it's size than yours anyway!" Tommy says.

"I think I'm getting too old for all these shenanigans." Jerry sighs.

Thanks for letting me show you my costume, I'm glad you like it! I think I am going to go do some trick or treating around the farm myself and see what the others think. They probably won't even be able to tell the difference! Happy Halloween boys!



Did you know that  
ghost trains are real?!

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# 2021 WHEATLAND EXPRESS SCHEDULE

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## OCTOBER

- 29 - Halloween Ghost Train  
Escape (16+)
- 30 - Halloween Ghost Train  
Escape (16+)
- 31 - Halloween Family  
Express

## DECEMBER

- 03- Christmas in Graceland
- 04 - Magical Holiday Express
- 05 - Magical Holiday Express
- 11 - Magical Holiday Express
- 12 - Magical Holiday Express
- 18 - Magical Holiday Express
- 19 - Magical Holiday Express

SEE YOU ALL NEXT SEASON!



STAY TUNED FOR ADDED DATES, TOURS  
AND TRAVEL OFFERS!

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[www.wheatlandexpresstrain.ca](http://www.wheatlandexpresstrain.ca)