

# THE WHEATLAND ROUNDUP

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## BLACKJACK GANG CLAIM THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 NOT THEIR FAULT

I, Perry Pickett, head reporter for the Wheatland Roundup, was able to catch up with the Blackjack gang at the saloon in Little Big Town. They were willing to give me an interview surrounding the rumours that their gang is the reason for the COVID outbreak in the area...as long as I bought the whiskey.

"We have been wearing masks for years, and we like to keep as much social distance as we can between us and the Law," claims Justice Jed, leader of the Blackjack gang. Times have been tough for the Blackjacks; again, the gang was rejected for the CERB payments ("Outlaw" is not a recognized occupation), and the news that there will be no Christmas trains has them in a foul mood.

"We use to like the cookies, and the chocolate milk was to die for," says Mucked-Up Mick, another gang member. "We ain't admittin' to killin' anyone for it though," claims another gang member who goes by the name Do-Right Daisy.

"The ladies usually carried extra cash, and that was always welcome come Christmas time! The holiday season was the best time of year for us," Jed went on to say. "Now we're surviving on roadkill and with the colder weather it's like TV frozen dinners."

"Especially the skunk," Mick adds. "There's too much hair, and it's hard to brush my teeth after." This causes the rest of the gang to burst out laughing. Do-Right Daisy was quick to get on his case. "Mick, you never brush your teeth anyhow."

"Anyway, we sure are excited that Wheatland Express put out a schedule for next year as that will help us with our planning," Jed says.

I asked if they had any comments on the new sheriff. The whole gang laughed. "We ain't worried about no Sheriff! Jenkins is by himself in a large territory. I also hear he is more worried about Big Mama Mopsy than any old holdup men. On the other hand, famous Amos is nothin' but a troublemaker, and we would prefer he stayed east of the Garlic Curtain."

Daisy adds, "If it's trouble he wants, we'll give it to him, but there'll be no negotiation or sharin' of rewards. Little Big Town ain't big enough for two gangs."

The BlackJack gang seem like they are planning to make up for a lost time as they prepare for their next act of lawlessness. As I was walking out the saloon door, Jed had one more thing he wanted to add. "Tell the readers of your paper Merry Christmas, and we really miss holding them up."

Riding back to the office, I had one thought on my mind: where is Sheriff Jenkins and who is Big Mama Mopsy?



(Pictured above is Justice Jed leader of the Blackjack gang)

# NOBLE NOTATION

## A Prairie Kids Christmas

Written by Bill Noble

Cast your memories (imagination) back to a time 'way before online shopping. It's Fall on the prairies in the late 1940's or early 50's and there was an early dusting of snow last night. It's cold getting up and walking to school. Although, I'm a town kid and don't know just how lucky I am. There are lots of farm kids who have chores to do and then harness a horse for the drive to school.

As I walk home after school, I check out some stuff. I hope the snow drifts up against Mr. Dolan's shed again this winter. It was a great place to dig a tunnel and make an igloo last year. I step in the back door and am engulfed in a wonderful aroma. Yes! Mom made buns and they are just out of the oven. "Go easy on those. You don't want to spoil your supper". But just a minute. What is that on the kitchen table? Oh boy, the Eaton's Christmas Catalogue is here.

The T. Eaton Company Ltd, founded in Toronto in 1869 by Irish immigrant Timothy Eaton, grew to become Canada's largest retailer with elegant department stores in every province and a nation wide mail order business. You could get just about anything at Eaton's from long johns to house construction packages that contained everything needed to build a stylish, comfortable home. It is still possible to find examples of Eaton houses on farms and in communities all across the prairies. And, if you couldn't get into an Eaton's store, everything came to the local post office or the CN or CP Railway Express office at the local station on the train. Eaton's grew with Canada's expanding railway system, establishing strong business and cultural ties with the railways.

But none of this mattered to a kid on a farm or in a prairie town. Christmas was coming and there were important decisions to be made. Our copy of the Christmas Catalogue grew dog-eared as I studied and dreamed and planned. Having only a fuzzy understanding of



the Santa Claus/Mom partnership, I dropped what I thought were casual references to items in the book. The merits of various choices were weighed. Would I go for that Red Ryder cap gun and holster or a Hornby clockwork train or maybe a Hardy Boys book? Prime Ministerial decisions are mere piffle by comparison. After I was in bed, Mom would weigh my choices and, influenced by practical considerations, might add some new underwear or a next-size-bigger pair of winter pants to the order and seal it up. Next day, as I sat in school, unaware that my Christmas morning fate was about to be delivered into the hands of Timothy's Store, my Dad, a grain elevator agent, added the precious order to a stack of company mail and walked across the tracks to the station. Upon the arrival of CNR Number 6, the southbound afternoon train to Regina and Winnipeg, he walked up to the mail car and popped the letters in. That used to impress me!

In addition to my small but important Christmas involvement with them, Eaton's had nation wide activities. Along with special products and lavish displays in every store window, there were store sponsored Santa Claus parades in major cities. In 1936, Eaton's Montreal store commissioned Canadian Pacific Railways to construct a 1/6-scale model of a Jubilee passenger locomotive and several kid-sized riding cars. The country's biggest electric train! The sixth floor of the store was transformed into Toyland. For a nickel, kids could ride through an enchanted forest populated with elves and magic and arrive for a chat with Santa. Afterwards, they would be handed a bag of goodies (worth, according to contemporary accounts, several times the 5 cent fare) to

enjoy on the trip back. The next year, the Toronto store contracted Canadian National's St Charles shops to construct a replica of a CNR streamlined Northern, while the Winnipeg store commissioned a CPR Royal Hudson a few years later.

But, Eaton's involvement with miniature trains was not limited to their three largest stores. Every store across the country had a large Lionel layout running in their Christmas Toyland. These layouts were quite large and intricate with several trains running and an array of Lionel's operating accessories on display. There were signals, bridges, cranes and log loaders. There was

even a special cattle car that deposited its beefy cargo at a stock pen. These spectacular layouts started many a youngster on a lifetime journey of model railway enjoyment. I still have vivid memories of seeing the display in the store in Moose Jaw. Wow!

Eaton's is gone. The name lives on in the Eaton Centre in Toronto but the company and its stores disappeared into bankruptcy in 1999. But for many of us, of a certain age, the approach of Christmas will trigger memories of the magic that arrived with the Eaton's

Christmas Catalogue. And I still remember that beautiful green Hornby clockwork locomotive.



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## EMPLOYEE PROFILE

**Name:** Richard Ward

**Born:** Lanigan, Sk

**Currently Reside:** Wakaw, Sk

**Work History:** Doepker Ind., Degleman Ind., Redhead Equipment, Great Sandhills Railway (General Foreman)

**Favorite Movie:** Grand Torino

**Favorite Sports Team:** Toronto Blue Jays

**Favorite Wheatland railcar:** GSR 2017 (Our 1950's Diner Car)

**Did you know:** Richard likes to garden, cook, can food, and butcher



(Pictured above is Richard with a fuel tank he designed and built for the generator for our new rail car)

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# SPIKES SAFETY SCOOP

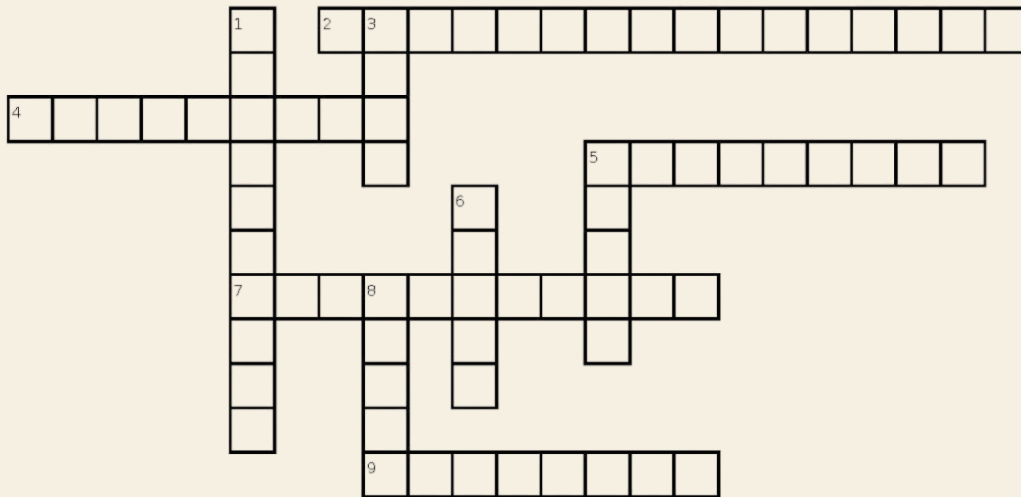
Hi boys and girls! It's Spike the safety dog here. One of my favourite things to do in the winter is ride my snowmobile; it is so much fun! It can also be dangerous if you are not being safe! When I ride, I always wear a helmet, and I stay aware of my surroundings.

I'm extra cautious around railway tracks! Did you know that trains are wider than the railway tracks? This is why you should never ride/walk on or by tracks, tunnels, and bridges as there is little to no room if a train were to come. It's sure not a safe place to be - at all! Since my snowmobile is a bit loud and I wear my helmet, it is not easy to hear a train coming. This is why I only cross at a designated crossing, and I always STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN before I cross, ensuring it is safe to go; not only is this the safest way, it is also the only legal way to cross railway tracks. Crossing anywhere else on the railway tracks is dangerous and against the law. I'm sure glad we got all this snow; I get to go pick up the Conductor with my snowmobile as he can't get to work! I should have invested in a vehicle with Doggie Power instead of horsepower. This will cost him A LOT of biscuits!



-Spike the safety dog

## CROSSWORD



### Down:

1. A rail transport vehicle that provides the power for the train
3. What the engineer uses to signal they are coming to a crossing
5. What has Prevented us from being able to take you for a ride in 2020
6. What most Sask. Originated train cars are carrying
8. The name of the Safety Trains Mascot

### Across:

2. Central Saskatchewan's premier excursion and event passenger train
4. Responsible for safe co-ordination of the train
5. A traffic sign used to indicate a level railway crossing
7. Doing this on railway tracks and property is dangerous and against the law
9. Responsible for safe operation of the locomotive

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# MEET THE SNOW FIGHTER



Winter has arrived in Wheatland Country. A few days ago, we received a dump of forty centimetres of snow driven by strong winds. Needless to say, cleaning up the resulting drifted mess from our roads, yards and driveways took quite an effort.

Railways are not exempt. However, here at Wheatland, we are ready. In the fight against Old Man Winter, we have a tough little scrapper in our corner: the Kershaw Snow Fighter. Manufactured by Knox Kershaw of Montgomery, Alabama, this versatile machine is also a ballast regulator and compactor. A ballast what?

Ballast is a vital part of the railway track. Ballast is the stones that surround the ties that support the steel rails. Ballast holds the track in place and helps it shed water, keeping the underlying roadbed firm and dry. Passing trains cause the tracks to move and flex.

Combined with the effects of weather, over time, this causes the rails, ties and ballast to shift and loosen. Every few years, railways need to realign the track and clean and top up the ballast. The self-propelled ballast regulator and compactor do the final step in this process.

After fresh ballast is spread along the track with hopper style cars, our versatile machine takes over. The Kershaw shapes (regulates) the ballast using a dozer blade and hydraulically operated wings. It then compacts the ballast with a rotating brush with heavy rubber fingers that vibrate the ballast and make it settle and lock in place. In a single pass, the job is done.

With a V-plough dozer blade and its movable wings, the Kershaw puts on its winter hat and becomes the Snow Fighter. Compact and powerful, the Snow Fighter easily clears snow from the track and adjacent right-of-way. Its movable wings allow it to fit into tight spots and clear sloping areas.

When you're out and about you might just see a bright yellow machine bustling about its business, clearing snow from our tracks. Now you know its called the Snow Fighter - the tough little guy in our corner.

Written by Bill Noble



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## OPERATIONS UPDATE

### Wheatland Express Excursion Train

December has arrived, much to our disbelief. The mild winter days and beautiful snow bring back our first Magical Christmas Express memories on our train. Though we can't share in the holiday train experience this year, we know how special it will be when we're able to gather again. Wheatland Express continues

to plan and develop for the next holiday season. From holiday excursions, business parties and private charters, we will be ready to welcome you aboard next season! This month, refurbishment on GSR 6120 and 6122 Buddliners has continued and is nearing completion. The crews have worked diligently and included some beautiful details that we can't wait to share with you in 2021. Also, on the rail car front, BIG NEWS - An authentic overnight railway experience is coming to the Wheatland Express in 2021! The "Pacific Rose" will be arriving at our railway in the new year, which means you and your loved ones will now be able to spend the night on the train. Stay tuned for updates and details! Itinerary and experiential development has continued, and we are thrilled about the partnerships and connections we are making. Travellers can expect to see some great travel packages and itineraries available through Uniglobe Carefree Travel. We have continued to participate in workshops such as Elevating Canadian Experiences through TIAC and Travel-Trade Readiness programs. Conductor Bill will soon complete Heritage Interpreter training through Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, and Ashlyn has completed Jon Schallert's Destination Creation Program hosted by the Saskatchewan Economic Development Alliance. Work continues with industry partners, and every day we are inspired by the ideas and enthusiasm of others. We know that great things will come through this challenging period. This holiday season, take special care. We wish you and yours a very merry and safe holiday season!



## Great Sandhills Railway

We have increased our work force to 7 people working out of Cudworth. They continue to work hard on the new passenger cars. We have had several hundred storage cars called back to service which has kept the operations staff busy.

Locomotive 5341 received some love and care this month as we replaced several cylinders and crank shaft. The locomotive has now been returned to service.

We have added a mail wagon to our collection. It will make for some nice photo ops this coming excursion season.



From the Great Sandhills Railway family we wish you and your family a Very Merry Christmas.

also been duplicating all our news posts and social media posts in both English and French!

With the unveiling of our many contests and prizes, we have been receiving many colouring pages, posters and PSA submissions in the mail and our email! We hope that everyone visits our website [www.canadiansafetytrain.ca](http://www.canadiansafetytrain.ca) to enter in our special contests and activities!



## Wheatland Express Learning Centre

With the construction of our Learning Center under way, we are extremely excited to give

our target audience a hands-on experience focused on railway safety and the railway itself. One of our first-year exhibits we are to unveil is "All-Aboard." This exhibit focuses more on the different types of career opportunities offered on the railway.

Displayed on tabletop screens, a person can sit down at one of two stations, and they will be asked a series of questions about their personal preferences, i.e. "would you rather paint a blank canvas, paint by numbers, paint a pre-drawn picture etc.) The algorithm in this software will narrow down the personality type of said participant, and then at the end, the display will offer them a list of the top 3 careers on the railway that suits the participant best. Thus, giving our target audience an idea of job possibilities and getting them more interested in the railway and especially how important safety is in every railway aspect.



## Wheatland Express Safety Train

This Winter, our team has been working hard on continuing a strong stance on all social media platforms. With that being said, we are pleased to announce that we are developing a French version of our website that will be revealed soon! We have



## Wheatland Charities Inc.

Wheatland Express Charities Inc. will be offering for purchase 2021 Wheatland Calendars. Calendars are

\$15.00 with all proceeds going to Christmas hamper efforts in Wakaw and Cudworth. Calendars are available for purchase on our website [www.wheatlandexpresstrain.ca](http://www.wheatlandexpresstrain.ca).

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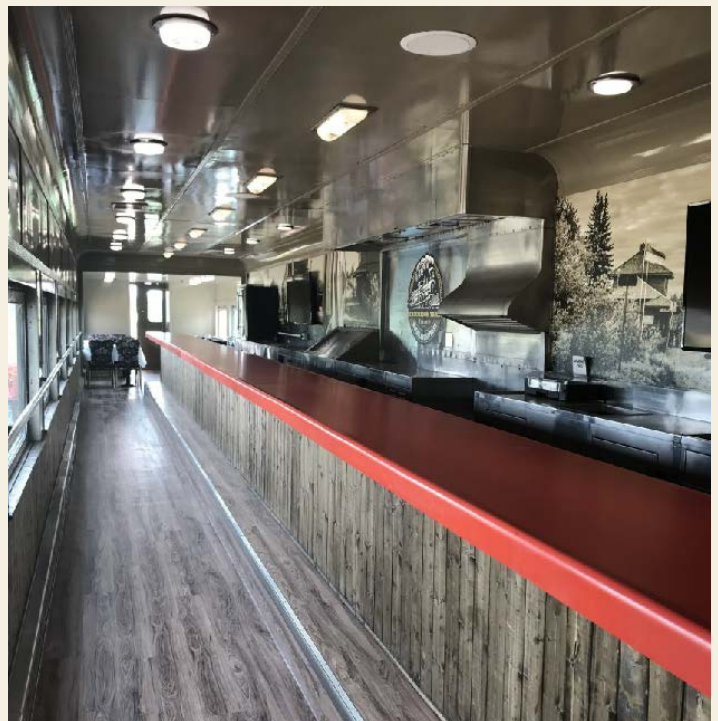
# 1950'S DINNER CAR

In 2017 Great Sandhills Railway purchased railcar AMTK 8398 from the Falls Road Railroad of Lockport, New York. Upon its arrival at our shop in Cudworth, Saskatchewan in 2018, it went through an extensive renovation to become the diner car you can enjoy today. The car, originally numbered UP 4001, was built by American Car and Foundry for the Union Pacific in July of 1955. It is one of only four cars labeled "lunch counter cars". In 1960 Union Pacific converted the car to a cafeteria lounge and it was subsequently absorbed into the Amtrak Fleet. The car was purchased from Amtrak by the Indiana Railroad Museum in 1976 and then sold in 2002 to the Golden Age Rail Equipment Corp. In 2007 Rails Journey West acquired the car and leased it to Canadian Pacific for use on their "Empress Train". CP never used the car on their Empress Train, as there were too many updates to be done before they could add it to their fleet. After being stored on the CPR in Calgary the car was purchased by the Falls Road Railroad and moved to Lockport, New York.

In its original configuration, the car had a red 40-foot lunch counter, red painted interior, a small galley and seating for 16. Although we have left the 40-foot red counter the car has been completely over-hauled inside and out with fresh paint, new flooring, new electrical, and new windows. The renovation took us just shy of a year and we were able to utilize the diner car for its first excursion with the Wheatland Express in 2019. The diner car newly numbered GSR 2017 now has seating for 30 and has quickly become a favorite among the staff and all our guests. When you book a trip on our train we encourage you to take a walk and have a good look at all of our cars, we bet you will love the 1950's Diner Car as much as we do.



( pictured above is the diner car when is first arrived in Cudworth and below is after renovations)



# 2021 WHEATLAND EXPRESS SCHEDULE

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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!