

# THE WHEATLAND ROUNDUP

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## A NEW SHERIFF IS COMING TO TOWN

Old Sheriff Nichols announced yesterday he is retiring after 52 years of service, citing a desire to spend time in a more hospitable climate with his wife. Reports of lawlessness in the surrounding area were beginning to cause unease amongst Little Big Town residents. Old Sheriff Nichols defended his position, saying, "These crimes are the works of professionals, the likes of which we've never seen in these parts! I certainly know, not to take on more than I can handle!" Little Big Town welcomes Bo Jenkins aboard as the new, younger, but seasoned Sheriff. Jenkins was born and raised in Montana with the reputation as a deliverer of justice with a mighty quick draw. Old Sheriff Nichols has agreed to stay on for the newcomer to be brought up to speed, and though his pistol grip is shaky, Nichols has even offered to lend his aim, should the action heat up. Historically, lawmen in Little Big Town have been kept on their toes with petty thievery and nuisance tied to the Blackjack Gang, somehow still firmly established in the area. Rumours are swirling that the recent criminal activity is the work of sharpshooter and moonshiner "Famous Amos." Amos is said to be the relative of the late "Gentleman Bandit" and has led the Smoking Ace Bandits from the East, robbing every rail line in their path. Rumours don't intimidate the new Sheriff, though. "I've come up against all sorts of gangs in my days, and I ain't scared of any criminals calling themselves after a card game!" Could this young Sheriff have enough gusto to stop Amos and his gang of Bandits? Will the Blackjack Gang and Smoking Ace Bandits collide for the biggest showdown Little Big Town has ever seen? Residents and visitors are encouraged to contact the Sheriff's department with any tips of suspicious activity.

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# NOBLE NOTATION

## Prairie Towns

Written by Bill Noble

These days, when we think nothing of getting in our car (half-ton, SUV) and zipping to Melfort or Saskatoon or beyond, it's hard to wrap our heads around a time when such roads as existed were summertime dirt trails following the surveyed lines on a map. A few were gravelled and pavement, what was that?

My mother-in-law Tina, who was born in 1920, remembered her parents coming home from a visit to Regina. "Tina, it's amazing; the roads in Regina are smooth as glass and hard - like the floor!" Most people didn't travel very far. And they didn't have to. They could get pretty much all they needed in the same little town where they took their grain to the elevator.

The railway took their grain to market and brought in the things people needed - just like it had brought in settlers and, indeed, the little towns.

Saskatchewan developed along the railway lines -indeed, the province and most of the towns were laid out with the railways very much in mind. Along the lines, towns were established about 10 miles (16 Km) apart because half that distance was considered about the limit that a farmer could haul a wagon load of grain with a team of horses.

Just consider how much work (and time) was needed for a man (and his wife almost certainly - farm life was a family job) to shovel a wagonload of grain, drive to town and then drive home again. And then do chores!

It was also convenient that 9 or 10 miles of railway track was about the limit that a Section Foreman and four Section Men could maintain. And those tracks were well maintained - all with basic shovels, picks and crowbars. Not to mention just getting to work on the hand-pumped work cars in the days before the motorized "jiggers" that came along later. Jobs "on the track" were considered prime employment, and the men who did them were considered to be fortunate.



Job security and pride in one's work were strong motivators. Trains, particularly passenger trains, could speed along, secure in the knowledge that the line was in good shape.

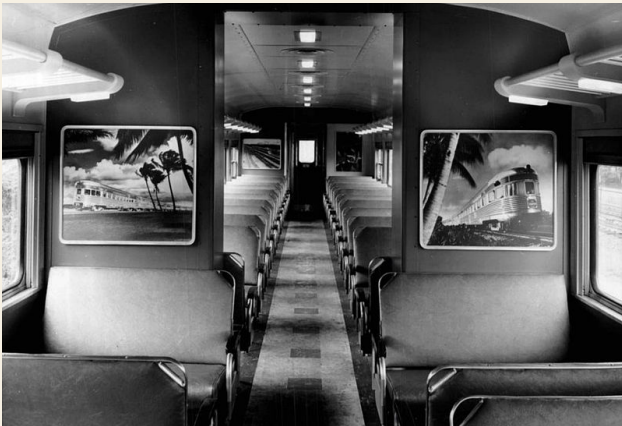
As you drive around the province, I'm sure that you have noticed that there is a similarity between many small prairie towns. No coincidence there! The railway company-owned or controlled the land. Wherever possible, stations were built with the front (platform side) facing East or South to take advantage of natural sunlight. The grain elevators (Elevator Road) were across the station tracks to enable them to be close to the station to conduct business but to keep the bustle, noise and smell of the wagon traffic away from the town. Main Street ran out the back door of the station while Railway Avenue ran parallel to the tracks. I wonder if anyone has ever compiled just how many "at the corner of Main and Railway" intersections there are in Saskatchewan. Prairie towns were similar, yes, but each was unique and very special to those who lived there. I know, I grew up in one!



# BUDD RAIL CARS ARRIVE

The Wheatland Express has added two new cars to its fleet! GSR 6120 and GSR 6122 were built in May 1955 by the Budd Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the Boston Maine Railroad. They served there until December 1976 when they were sold to Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority handling commuter traffic in the Boston area until retired and sold to the Seminole Gulf Railway in Fort Meyers, Florida. Seminole Gulf Railway used the cars as SLGR 6120 and SLGR 6122 on their excursion passenger service.

The Budd Company named these cars the Budd Rail Diesel Car (RDC), intended for passenger service in rural areas of low traffic density



Pictured above is an RDC-1 in it's original state.

or short-haul commuter service. They were less expensive to operate as they were self-propelled diesel multiple units (DMU), used singly or coupled together in train sets, controlled from the front unit's cab.

RDC cars were the first example of self-contained diesel multiple unit trains, an arrangement now in everyday use by railways worldwide. The Budd company designed five basic variants of the RDC:

- RDC-1: 85ft passenger cars (the same design as our new arrivals!);
- RDC-2: 85ft baggage and passenger coaches;
- RDC-3: 85ft railway post office with a baggage compartment and some passenger seating;
- RDC-4: 85ft used strictly as a railway post office and baggage car;
- RDC-9: 85ft unpowered passenger trailer with room for 94 passengers.

The Buddliner was one of the few DMU trains to achieve commercial success in North America! The Wheatland Express acquired them in late 2019. GSR 6120 and GSR 6122 arrived in Cudworth, Saskatchewan, during the summer of 2020. Our crews have been working very hard to refurbish and equip the cars for use aboard the Wheatland Express Excursion Train. We can't wait for you to see them when we re-open!

## EMPLOYEE PROFILE

**Name:** William "Bill" Noble

**Born:** Rosetown, Sk 1944

**Currently Reside:** Wakaw, Sk

**Work History:** 1963-1987 RCAF/Canadian Forces Air Armament, 1987-1999 Department of National Defence Research & Development, 2019-Wheatland Express Inc.

**Favorite Movie:** The Dambusters

**Favorite Sports Team:** Mercedes Formula 1 Racing Team

**Favorite Wheatland railcar:** GSR 2017 our 1950's Diner car

**Did you know:** Bill is the first person to be approved for the Emerit Heritage Interpreter Certification Program with the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council under the Re-open Saskatchewan Training Subsidy!



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# WORD SEARCH

LOOK            Y F A C P O L B G F M I X E T A Y N Y P G M I N T  
R X G R B R P A T X Z S T J M G Y S W V F C M G K

WHEATLAND    A T Y D A K B X F N F Q O X E Q G P O T C A T I F  
I A O V H C V G V N A T B C L V M T I G S I A F Q

TRACKS        L W L A D V O R F J E F F C E O D K W M A U Q U V

RAILWAY       W P H J Y O V S J H Z Y C C F X C S I W G H D Q T  
A S G E U J I G Y S U Z V E O R D O O D J Z C N K

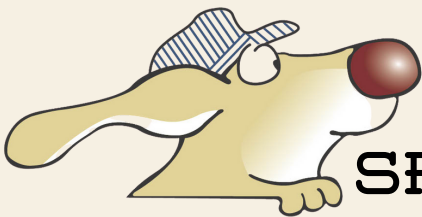
SAFETY        Y X A W A X A M O A P L C S U I T O M G P R Z V D  
L U N M N T Q D J F I Z R G L H R O L O S P I K E

LISTEN        O W M C G E L Y U E V Y O X V N A J W U T T N C B

WHEATLAND    O W R A Q P C A R T Q L S F V T C N C X V I P M I  
K K K M D M U R N Y C F S E F X K A V V C G V T S

SPIKE         H V Z Q J Q L Q W D X V I X E D S M I I X G F E X  
M N M J P N M O A K Q Y N C R U P B G G U W I P E

LOCOMOTIVE   B H T G H Q S S W J U P G L S T D L I S T E N H B



## SPIKES SAFETY SCOOP

Hey there, I'm Spike, the Safety Dog! I am all about safety, and I am always super cautious around railway tracks and crossings. Trains take a long time to stop, and if you are not paying attention, you can get seriously injured. When you have to cross railway tracks, always cross at designated crossings, look both ways, and make sure it is safe. Remember, trains can come at any time, in any direction, on any track. Did you know there are over 24,000 railway crossings in Canada? If I had 24,000 doggie biscuits, I would be one happy dog! Thinking about all those biscuits has made me hungry; I will see if I can get one of the locomotive engineers to give me a biscuit. Stay safe, and bye for now!



-Spike the safety dog

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## A TRAIN TO REMEMBRANCE

It's Fall in Wheatland County. The leaves are gone, we had some early snow this morning, and it's almost November. Remembrance Day is coming up, and we slow down and think of times past. We reflect on heroism and sacrifice, and pride. We remember past November 11 ceremonies that we have attended or taken part in. Maybe we laid a wreath to remember an Uncle or recited "In Flanders Fields" or joined in a hymn or were merely there. The important thing was that we took part.

Remembrance Day gives us a setting when we can enjoy a sense of belonging to a larger effort. The stories that are told remind us not only of individual acts of dash and valour but also of what it felt like to be part of the team. I was in the Air Force. I remember, during my time at university, going to Ontario for summer training. Our journey on Canadian National's Super Continental started in Vancouver with a sleeping car full of cadets from UBC. Then we picked up a car from the University of Alberta. Then more from Saskatoon and finally more from Winnipeg. We were on an adventure. We were part of a team.

I was privileged to serve a career in the Royal Canadian Air Force and Canadian Forces. I was fortunate that, during my service, Canada never went to war. We were, instead, "Cold Warriors" pitted against the shadowy might of the Warsaw Pact. A while after my retirement, distinctive veterans' licence plates were introduced to honour veterans. I didn't get one. Somehow, I didn't feel my service met my standard of what a veteran was. After all, I had just been in the service. I didn't go in harms way. I wasn't in

Normandy or Korea or Afghanistan. I was just in the service. Finally, a few years ago, my friend Lyle, Company Sergeant Major Saumer (Ret) of the PPCLI, remarked on my lack of a veterans' plate. He said, "You know Buddy. We all did our part. We're all veterans".

This year, with COVID threatening us at every turn, we come again to Remembrance Day. It will be different this year. In fact, there is a very strong possibility that there may be only reduced if any, public ceremonies. But it doesn't matter. We can still remember our veterans and honour them. But we should take a moment to consider all of us. We are all part of a huge effort. When we wear a mask or sanitize our hands for the gazillionth time or keep our distance, we are all doing our part to bring us all through this thing safely. We are part of the team, and we should serve with pride. We are all veterans.

Just something to think about. And by the way, I'll drive my Mini with its veterans' licence plate with just a little more pride.

Written by Bill Noble



# OPERATIONS UPDATE

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## Great Sandhills Railway

We have continued several projects and additions to our operation. We have added an SD-40 and another GP-38 locomotive to our operation. The equipment will allow us to pull more cars and give us more options in the operation of the Wheatland Express.



We changed about 500 ties on the trackside and spent seven days with the tamper surfacing the track taking out some of the holes created by the previous seven years' operation.



## Wheatland Express Safety Train

The Wheatland Express Safety Train has released an updated website and moved forward with a strong social media presence to reach our target audience. Due to COVID19, our team has shifted focus from in-person classes to teaching online, using various web platforms.

In September, in recognition of Rail Safety Week, our team distributed 3,761 English and French of our Rail Safety Activity Books to grade four students across Saskatchewan. At that time, the Wheatland Express Safety Train unveiled three different contests for children and youth between 3-19 years old. Enter a Colouring, Safety Poster Design, and Public Service Announcement Contest about railway safety before December 15, 2020, for

a chance to win an Ipad Mini, a family trip aboard the Wheatland Express Excursion Train, or a \$1,000 Scholarship! Access the contest details or activity books on our website [www.canadiansafetytrain.ca](http://www.canadiansafetytrain.ca)

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## Wheatland Express Learning Centre

The Wheatland Express Safety Train is proud to announce that we were approved for a 3-year grant to build an interactive Learning Center that will be a vital part of teaching our target audience members about railway safety and awareness. The Learning Center will be home to eight interactive, hands-on exhibits. The exhibits will focus on multiple railway safety items, such as demonstrating how long it takes a train to stop, how quiet a train runs, and showing the effects of distracted driving. The first exhibit to roll-out will be a Train Trivia that will test your railway knowledge in a fun and exciting way! Displayed on a large screen, up to four participants will answer five questions. With each correctly answered question, the player's train will progress along the tracks to the Station. The player whose train travels the furthest in the shortest amount of time will be the winner. The Train Trivia exhibit is bilingual, offering three difficulty levels accessible to all participants, including those with learning or physical disability.

Wheatland Express Safety Train looks forward to sharing developments as the project progresses.



## Wheatland Charities Inc.

Wheatland Express Charities Inc. will be offering for purchase 2021 Wheatland Calendars with all proceeds being donated to local food banks. Please watch the Wheatland Express website, [www.wheatlandexpressstrain.ca](http://www.wheatlandexpressstrain.ca), for calendar release and purchase information.



## Wheatland Express Excursion Train

This year was exceptionally challenging for all of us. Under government restrictions, Wheatland Express was unable to operate our 2020 excursions and indefinitely postponed our events. We are determined to endure and protect our beloved Saskatchewan experience. The Wheatland Express Team has appreciated the kind messages and words of encouragement from our guests with all our hearts. During this downtime, there have been many exciting updates around the Wheatland Express. Some of the highlights include:

- The addition of new railcars to our fleet - Welcome GSR 6120 and GSR 6122!
- Complete refurbishment to the railcars to expand our tour season into the shoulder and winter seasons;
- A newly developed website has gone live through support provided by Tourism Saskatchewan;
- The Government of Saskatchewan's Re-Open Saskatchewan Training Subsidy has allowed our team members to participate in Emerit Heritage Interpretator Certification and the SEDA's Destination Creation Program
- Experience & Interineary Development is continually underway. Passengers can expect a newly designed excursion experience when we return to service. We are working closely with industry partners to deliver exciting new adventures, itineraries and travel offers.
- The preliminary Excursion Schedule for 2021 is now available

Are you dreaming of the eventual return to roaming? We are optimistically looking toward the future and accepting reservations for the 2021 tour season! We have put plans, safeguards and signage in place to ensure that it will be possible to welcome back our guests, artists, and staff safely.

Our team is available by e-mail or telephone to answer your questions and process reservations or refunds. Best wishes to all you and yours until our re-opening date! We'll be saving you a seat!



# 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!