The Railway Museum of BC

Newsletter

July- September 2026

The North Pole Express is back again this year but with changes!



RAILWAY MUSEUM OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Volume 66
Issue # 3

FROM THE EDITOR

Another successful season has almost come to a close. The front cover photo shows some of the classic cars entering the park for our Classic Car Saturday organized by Singh Biln. Our last day with be Thanksgiving Monday, Oct. 13th. This year, we were open additional days, many weeks with a Thursday to Saturday operation and also open on Sundays on the long weekends. Attendance was up this year and gift shop sales also did well. Due to Daylight Saving now year round, our North Pole Express departures are all moved ahead by one hour starting at 11 AM.

If you can help in either the preparation for the event or during NPX, please get in touch with Chrissy: (chrissy@wcra.org).



Want to take a minute to thank David and Manji Sidoo, who supported our Museum's 'Summer Kids' program over the past two years!

Updates from WCRA

President's Report: Bob Philip

As the museum days come to a close on Thanksgiving week-end, staff and volunteers are turning their attention to preparing for the North Pole Express. NPX is the premier event at the museum, not only in terms of attendance and revenue generation, but also in the time and effort it takes to prepare. The train ride is one part of the experience and has its own list of preparation needs but the magic of the North Pole with the mini rail ride to Santa's workshop means turning the Roundhouse and the car shop into a magical land and this is no easy feat.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who work so hard to help make this happen every year.

General Manager's Report - Gord Bell

CN Roundhouse & Conference Centre

In the past quarter Blacksheep Event Rentals has continued to successfully manage growth and improve the bottom line. Year to date, profit is up 36% over 2025. The Blacksheep team will transition to the North Pole Express setup over the next week. The Film business is slightly ahead of 2025 and will likely finish the year in that position.

Building the marketing plan for the 2027 Museum and Event season has been a big focus and we plan to launch the CN Roundhouse portion sometime in late January.
The focus from now until the end of the year will be on the production of, and sales for, the North Pole Express. Year to date ticket sales are slightly ahead of 2025.

Museum Operations & Rail Services Report

Singh Biln - Vice President & Kirby Read - Manager Rail Services
NOTE: This Quarter Report combines Museum Operations and Rail Services

Shuttles

Kirby & crew are getting both shuttles running and moving. The Rail Services team, plus Greg's CP8000 volunteers Richard, Eric & Bill, are now proceeding with additional repairs including lights, bells & horns, replacing broken windows, removing toilets, and installing additional seats.





Mini Rail

Locomotives SRY #124 and BCR #4601 continue operating while BCR# 646 is being readied for service. Its riding car has been painted by Greg's CP8000 volunteers and decals have been ordered. The 646 long hood will be painted and stencilled over in the next couple of weeks.



Track-master volunteer Gary Shortt remains in Ontario with his wife Kathy (gift shop volunteer) as she deals with some medical issues. But Gary left the mini-rail tracks in great shape with all new metal mile-board and other signs, replacing the rotting wood ones. He has also sent detailed instructions for setting up the indoor mini-rail track for NPX, in case he does not get back soon.

MOTIVE POWER

Unit FP9A CN#6520 needs a wheel turn and air brake valves rebuilt. Kirby is arranging the brake rebuild by a shop in Manitoba and the wheel turn at VIA while. insurance & liability documents are nearing completion and the unit should be shipped to VIA soon.

Budd Car BC-21 continues to operate reliably during our operating days but requires minor repairs and major inspection/servicing over the winter. A detailed winter work plan is also being developed for BC-33 to have it operational for the 2027 season!

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Last summer, we applied for a matching grant from Heritage BC for Carshop Rehabilitation. We were successful in getting the maximum $50,000 and received the first $25,000 earlier this year . Singh's colleague from BC Rail and former WCRA Mechanical Manager Rod Jenkins came up with an innovative process to repair and clad the doors in place, instead costly removal and rebuild method. Singh has set up a small team of volunteers to work with Rod to repair the 5 large doors and 5 smaller doors at a total cost of $12,5000 for materials and estimated rental equipment. The volunteers will provide their services for tax receipts.





After Power Wash

The rented all-terrain scissor lift was used to power wash the Carshop exterior in preparation for the painting portion of the project, expected to be done in 2027. Kirby is taking advantage of the rental by getting his staff to power wash other buildings and rail equipment as a part of his site improvement initiative. And the Kids play area was cleaned up significantly, along with other areas accessed by our guests.

#374 Pavilion - George Game

George received a compliementary email from a visitor to the Pavilion who is the Communications Manager for the California State Rail Musuem in Sacramento:

George:
I'm the Communications Manager at the California State Railroad Museum Foundation in Sacramento. My wife and I were in Vancouver the weekend of September 26-27th and spent some time that Sunday morning in the pavilion checking out C.P.R. #374. I was very impressed with the locomotive and the displays. I very much enjoyed reading everything and learning more about the Canadian Pacific.
We didn't have time to visit the museum in Squamish on this trip; we'll keep that in mind for the next visit.
Thank you for all you do.
Regards,
Kevin Hecteman Marketing and Communications Manager
California State Railroad Museum Foundation



Kaoham Shuttles

Since the Shuttles are now part of our collection, Singh Biln has provided background on the history of the Shuttles.

The BC Rail tracks between North Vancouver and Prince George parallel Highways 99 and 97, so nearly all communities along its route are served by good all-weather roads except Seton Portage. Although only 24km from Lillooet by rail, the distance by an unpaved road over the mountain is 72km! This road is virtually impassable in winter. So rail service was deemed essential for the community.
In the previous 50 years, the community was served with several dedicated rail transport modes including a gas motorcar hauling a trailer, self-propelled Budd Rail Diesel Cars and a locomotive-hauled coach. BC Rail considered these options but decided on two custom 20-passenger shuttle motorcars based on Fairmont track maintenance vehicles known as speeders.
Designated as Track Units #108 and #109, the aluminum bodied vehicles were custom built for a tourist excursion in Folsom California that was cancelled. BC Rail purchased the two vehicles and installed several comfort and safety features to meet provincial regulatory requirements. These shuttles were the most cost-effective option in terms of acquisition and operation. As Track Units, these vehicles could be operated and maintained by only one bargaining unit rather than by several with other options at BC Rail.





As most of the communities of Seton Portage and Shalalth are members of the Tsal'alh First Nation, their operation was turned over to the Seton Indian Band. Ticketing, schedules and operations were all done by the Band who also provided the on-board hostess. The single qualified operator was a BC Rail employee but also a member of the Tsal'alh First Nation.
Regular operations commenced on October 31, 2002, the same day all other passenger services ceased on BC Rail. The vehicles were covered by a First Nations poster and named Kaoham Shuttles. Over the next 20 years, these shuttles ran every day except Christmas, making at least one return trip to Lillooet and two trips on Fridays and certain holidays. During this time, they achieved over 90% reliability as they were simple in design and nearly every component could be purchased at a local Ford or NAPA dealer.

In July 2004, BC Rail was sold to CN Rail who continued to operate the shuttles until 2022 when CN deemed them to be unreliable and costly to rebuild. In October 2025, the West Coast Railway Association (WCRA) purchased them to save them from being scrapped. In 2027, WCRA plans to operate them at their Railway Museum of British Columbia in Squamish, BC. These shuttles were an important part of BC's railroading history and will be used to tell the story of First Nations contributions to railroading. WCRA will be partnering with the Squamish First Nation to develop, display and relate this story.

Honouring our Volunteers



Photo by: David Walmsley

A number of our long time volunteers quietly volunteer years of service at the museum. One of these key members is Tom Bruvall. When we used to do *Day Out with Thomas* I was the trainmaster. After Colin Dathan retired from being the DOWT line-up supervisor, Tom took over policing the line-up for each departure (which was sold out). But some folks would try to get on an earlier departure. Each ticket had a departure time on it and NOBODY ever got past Tom with an invalid ticket! One of the many activities around the park that Tom loves to do is paint and take care of the vegetable garden next to the Brightbill House
Always friendly and always a smile, I don't know what we would do without Tom!

Special Editorial Feature

Extra Gangs and The Frontier College

By: WCRA Member William Johnston (who worked on the gangs in this article)

After the second world war Canada's railroads needed serious upgrading after heavy use with little maintenance. Major projects were commenced in the late forties. This continued through the fifties. Ties needed replacing, ballast needed upgrading, old 85 lb rails were exchanged for heavier steel, and rotting timber bridges were upgraded or replaced with fills. Because of the large amount of manual labour required the major components in the execution of the required work were extra gangs. These consisted of up to 100 men, often European immigrants. They were housed in work trains of up to 20 cars.

A typical work train consisted of at least a dozen bunk cars, a couple of dining cars, kitchens, storage cars, a water tank car, fuel tank car, wash car, office and foreman bunks and a couple of bunk/office cars for engineering personnel. In the late '50's your author, an engineering student, was resident in the latter accommodation for most of 2 summers on the CNR in Alberta and BC. Most of the rolling stock was converted from 40' boxcars and was very basic. The accompanying photos show a work train northeast of Calgary whose crews were accomplishing major restoration work on ballast, fencing and tie replacement.









Today's extra gangs enjoy modern purpose-built camp type accommodation mounted on flat cars. Today with modern machinery to perform most tasks, the need for a lot of manual labour is considerably reduced. Hence the gangs are much smaller accomplishing the same results.

An important and often forgotten part of the operation were Labourer/Teachers of the Frontier College.
It once was the oldest Canadian literacy organization. Its goal was to improve literacy in Canada by helping people in need of a basic education who have, for whatever reason, been overlooked by the standard public education system. Labourers on a work train certainly qualified.

To meet this objective, Frontier College provided a range of literacy and educational programs. The most important was of course English. Frontiier College was founded In 1899, by Nova Scotian Presbyterian minister Alfred Fitzpatrick (1862-1936), who was inspired by the teachings of the Social Gospel. It was first known as the Reading Camp Association working in northern Ontario. Fitzpatrick wanted to make elementary-level education accessible to remote communities. The Association targeted tens of thousands of men, mainly immigrants who spoke neither English or French who lived and worked in various remote logging camps, mining sites or railway gangs. Labourer/Teachers of the Association (usually university students) travelled to these remote areas and spent significant time working alongside the workers. In the evenings they set up on-site reading tents, or in the case of railway workers the dining car was the classroom. These young men gathered the workers who were interested in learning, and taught them how to read, write and do arithmetic.

The word frontier in the organization's name was a reference to a "frontier college" in the sense of the Frontier thesis. This distinctly North American concept was popular in the interwar period and encompassed the specific reality of the various regions - i.e. remote areas, forest and mountain regions, river and lake areas — that gradually became more accessible and, in some cases, later inhabited by settlers.

Over the years, the efforts of the literacy organization spread to an increasing number of towns and cities. Frontier College extended its field of educational programs to prisoners, factory workers, farmers, fishers, agricultural workers (particularly those from Latin America), Aboriginal people and immigrants in urban areas. Its services became more diverse and continually adapted to new social demands placed on public elementary education and literacy. Today the organization is known as 'United for Literacy'. The organization is still active throughout Canada, working in community centres as well as in Aboriginal reserves, refugee centres, farms, logging camps and prisons.
This little-known part of railway life was important to the many workers that built and maintained Canada's railways.

CURRENT RAIL NEWS

CPKC wins Amtrak Award

CPKC has been recognized by Amtrak as its top performing host railroad, the 10th straight year the railroad or predecessor Canadian Pacific has been so honored
.
Tamara Noel, Amtrak assistant vice president, host railroads, presented CPKC with a plaque commemorating the achievement in a July 24th visit to the railroad's U.S. Operational Center.

"We appreciate what you do to keep Amtrak trains on time," Noel said in a press release. "Your commitment and attention to detail are a part of our success."

CPKC hosts portions of five Amtrak routes: the *Empire Builder* and *Borealis*, between Minneapolis and Chicago; the *Hiawatha,* between Milwaukee and Chicago; the *Ethan Allen Express*, between New York City and Burlington, Vt; and the *Adriondack*, between New York City and Montreal. (TRNS)

CPKC CEO Keith Creel on tentative UP/NS Merger

The proposed Union Pacific - Norfolk Southern merger will not win regulatory approval because its harms outweigh the benefits , CPKC CEO Keith Creel says. But if the $85 billion deal does somehow satisfy the Surface Transportation Board's 2001 merger review rules, Creel says the approval will be so loaded up with conditions to offset its competitive impacts that UP likely would scuttle the merger.

"Those new regulations say that if the goods do not outweigh the bads, and I' m saying this in layman's terms, thou shalt not approve the merger," Creel told an investor conference on Thursday. "And if it does get approved, it's going to come with heavy concessions to try to offset the competitive harm that it creates."

CPKC 2026 Holiday Train stops in BC

The CPKC Holiday Train crosses into BC on Dec.16th with stops in Golden & Revelstoke, Dec. 17th in Sicamous & Salmon Arm, Dec. 18th in Kamloops, Savona & Ashcroft, Dec. 19th in Lytton, Agassiz, Haney/Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows and completes her nation wide trip on Dec. 20th in Port Moody & Port Coquitlam. (CPKC)

CN

CN has been granted haulage rights from Memphis to the Eagle Pass, Texas, gateway to reach Ferromex . In exchange , CN will allow UP to use its former Elgin, Joliet & Eastern bypass around Chicago . In an agreement that hinges on approval of the merger and clears up UP - NS route overlap issues , CN will operate over UP's route from Kansas City to the St . Louis area, serve customers in the corridor , and also gain the right to serve the handful of customers whose options will go from two to one Class I railroad or from three to two.

CN CEO Tracy Robinson earlier this week touted the deal , particularly CN's improved access to Mexico and the growth opportunities from burgeoning Canada-Mexico trade. Robinson noted that CN will have a three- to four-day

transit time advantage for shipments moving between Mexico and Eastern Canada.

UP

Union Pacific Railroad announced on Sept. 26th, the arrival of two battery-electric locomotives in Southern California, part of the company's ongoing investments in testing next-generation technologies in real-world operating environments.



The locomotives are the first of four FLXdrive battery-electric units built by Wabtec and ordered by Union Pacific. Two additional locomotives are scheduled to arrive in October, completing the four-unit fleet that will operate in the greater Los Angeles area.

The FLXdrive, which is powered by approximately 7,000 battery cells, will undergo extensive testing in a variety of railroad operations, including switching and providing local customer service. UP states by operating in a busy rail yard, it will give the railroad valuable data on the technology's performance, reliability and operational capabilities. (TRNS)

AMTRAK

The on-time departure of Amtrak Cascades train No. 503 from Seattle for Eugene, Ore., at 7:10 a.m. on Sept. 30th marked the debut of Siemens Airo trainsets. Note a converted F40 cab car leads the 'Cascades' as BNSF will not let the Airo cab cars lead because they will not properly activate signals and grade-crossing warning devices.



Looking Back:

August 1981 News

SPECIAL MEETING: A joint WCRA/CRHA meeting with Transpo '86 officials will be held Wed. Sept. 16, 1930 hrs, in the Vets Room of the CN station. This is where we will present our ideas for rail events to the Transpo people. Recent visits by the British have resulted in a comittment for the Royal Scot & train plus other historical items. Let's all turn out to this special meeting to ensure local rails get proper representation at the Exposition.

FROM WCRA'S JULY MEETING - Pertinent items frcm Recording Secretary Bob Hunter's minutes:
- collection of damages resulting frcm the court case over locomotive #16 continues. There has been less then full co-operation on the part of the debtor and a further court session will be held Aug. 12 to help with the collection process
- the proposed trip to Lillooet on the BCR has been rescheduled to October 17 & 18 in order to take advantage of winter group rates.
- member John Shaske outlined his project to fight the proposed VIA cuts - petitions to be gathered on a Super-Continental cross Canada trip. Details and petitions will be available at the August meeting.

The WCRA has been asked by Mike Hillman of Transpo '86 for any input or ideas the Association might have for rail activities/events/displays that could be part of the Transpo '86 exposition. This is our chance to see that the rails get adequate representation - both current and historical - at the Transpo Fair. A round table discussion will be a major part of the August meeting. If you can attend, bring your ideas along; if you can't, jot them down and mail them in (or give them to another member if the mail still isn't working). No matter how big or small your idea - speak up now.

Drake Street Update:

The three B.C. Place reports on the Drake St. roundhouse - structural, economic, and restoral cost - have now been released and are being reviewed. The Friends of the Roundhouse continue to fight for preservation of this historic structure, and have now incorporated into an official society. Donations are welcomed.
On Aug. 31, the "Friends" will make a presentation to B.C. Place on the use of a preserved Drake St. Roundhouse as a transportation and railway museum. This certainly has to be the most logical move for Drake St., and would be an enhancement for the whole Vancouver area

('Look Backing' cont'd)
The prospect of the roundhouse remaining as an active maintenance base for B.C.'s steam engines must also be kept in the forefront. The recent example of the Royal Hudson shows the importance of the facility - it had to be barged and gingerly towed to the Roundhouse.

CP
C.P. Rail has applied to the CTC for permission to proceed with a $500M grade improvement program through Rogers Pass in the Selkirk Mountains. The improvement would reduce the gradient facing trains from 2.6% now, to 1% and would take four years to complete. The project requires two tunnels totalling 16 km & 32 km of new track, and 11 bridges.
There is, however, an "if". Bill Stinson, CP Rail president, says that although the railway wants to start next year, it will only go ahead "if a way can be found for the railway to be compensated for multi-million dollar losses it incurs in moving export grain traffic". This means a revision to the "Crowsnest" grain rates - an agreement where grain rates were frozen at 1897 levels in exchange for allowing CP to build a rail line from Lethbridge through Crowsnest Pass. Both CP and CN are seeking an increase of between 500 and 600% for grain rates, CP saying it lost $115M on grain in 1980. So the battle is on - the railways both saying their lines are at capacity, to avoid that, they need money for expansion, and that the money should come from realistic grain rates. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Trudeau has said Ottawa will not deal with the Crowsnest rates until western farmers and conmodity officials agree that change is necessary.

An interesting article in the current issue of CP Rail News recounts that in its 100 years of existence, CP has learned to live with the moods of nature. Landslides, storms, and forest fires are all part of the company's history. Perhaps nowhere was the company's mettle tested more severely then during the great Fernie fire, in 1908. Canadian Pacific's decisive action during the disaster probably saved the lives of hundreds of trapped people.
Bush fires had been burning in the Crows Nest territory of British Colmtoia for some time, and were expected to burn themselves out. It was not a new situation and residents in the area were not alarmed by it. But then the worst happened. A protracted dry spell fanned by a strong wind turned 100 square miles of country into a seething mass of flames, completely destroying the city of Fernie. Michel and Coal Creek also suffered serious damage. Hosner was only a little luckier. It was a national catastrophe. Property losses were estimated at $7M, more than 70 people died, and upwards of 5,000 were left homeless.
What made matters worse was the fact that there was no simple way of escape. The whole region was ablaze and many who escaped their houses found themselves no better off in the countryside. Every newspaper in the country had carried reports of the conflagration.

('Looking Back' cont'd)

The Aug 2nd Montreal Gazette said: "It is feared many have perished in the relentless flames. Fanned by the great wind that was blowing, the city was at the mercy of the fire fiend, the wind attaining a velocity and force of a cyclone."

Canadian Pacific, which also suffered great property loss, responded quickly. Relief trains were sent into the area carrying supplies, medical equipment, and much needed food. These trains were the only means of escape for the thousands of people trapped by the fire.

Crowds rushed to the railway stations in the hope of getting on one of these trains, and luckily, most of them did. The trains were reported running through sheets of flame "which repeatedly set fire to the coaches. It was this action that helped keep the loss of life to a minimum.

Across Canada towns contributed to the Fernie fire relief fund. Canadian Pacific, in turn, contributed $10,000 - but it was the selfless spirit of its train crews that drew the most praise from the people.

The Fernie District Fire Relief Fund acknowledged the company's contribution in a letter which said: "Our heartfelt thanks to the officials and employees of the company whose forethought provided a means of escape from the conflagration, and without which great loss of life would undoubtedly have resulted".

Metro Transit

In a recent 'Name the LRT Contest' sponsored by radio station CKNW the name 'QT' which stands for "Quick Trans", or "Quick Transit" was selected as the winner. There were 1500 entries with over 1000 different names suggested. Among the other suggestions: VanGo, Get-N-Go, Streaker, Zipper, Fastrac and VanderZoom. One of the judges was GVRD Transit Comiittee Chairman Ian Young. Officially the proposed system has not yet been given a name.

The UTA has approved the purchase of 50 new diesel buses for the Greater Vancouver Transit System. Delivery should be completed by March 31, 1982. Fifteen of the new buses will have a special hill climbing capability which will be of particular advantage on North Vancouver and Simon Fraser routes.

In July, 50 new GM buses were delivered to Victoria. The buses, in the OTA orange paint scheme, were driven west in a cavalcade which passed your editor in late June in the Rockies. Once delivered to Victoria, there was a delay getting them in service due to the ICBC strike creating problems with licencing. The new GM's will release several Orions for use else- where in the province.

ALRT Updates

On July 24, Vancouver Fire Chief Norman Harcus warned that future ALRT passengers could be endangered by exposure to hazardous materials if the ALRT proposal and a CP Rail proposal to build a waterfront tunnel like structure both went ahead.

('Looking Back cont'd)

Four Canadian companies have just been named to design the new ALRT system. Forming a joint venture arrangement for engineering the system are: Associated Engineering Services Ltd., of Vancouver; H.A. Simons (International) Ltd. of Vancouver; D.M.J.M. Thomson Ltd., of Victoria; and Hatch Associates Ltd., of Toronto. The companies will begin work immediately on designing the system.

The proposal would put ALRT and CP Rail on adjacent enclosed tracks, and CP Rail transports hazardous materials on their rails! Based on that warning, a public hearing into the C.P. proposal was postponed until committee members are sure the plan is safe.

About the same time, a U.S. transit expert said that the ALRT vehicles have a potential stability problem that could lead to derailments. A study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology indicates the potential exists in wet weather and at low speeds for the vehicles to move from side to side causing uncornfort in the ride - and at worst case derailment. The potential instability is due to the steerable truck, and would increase as wear occurred. In addition the study identifies concerns over the Linear Induction Motors performance (it is unproven in regular service), the units used to transfer electricity from the third rail to the motors, and the braking systems.

The GVRD then got involved, and attached a number of "conditions" for its approval of the system. Included were that the system be implemented to GVRD specs, that federal funds be put "up front", that the tracks be built to carry standard LRT as well as ALRT vehicles, and that the system be built, tested, and operated for 2 years by Metro Canada without operators. Then followed the usual in-committee "discussion" - but the motions were passed. Also included were several route deviations from the UTA plans.

Lastly, the proposed station at B.C.Place came under criticism, because it is located too far from the new stadium. A GVRD report suggests that many commuters won't walk the 600 metres between the two, and will drive to events instead. B.C. Place responded with aghast- "Of course not...can you imagine anyone not using rapid transit because they have to walk a city block?" asked B.C. Place president Gil Hardnan. There is, however, no truth to the rumour that B.C. Place has now decided to make its closest parking more than 600 m. from the stadium!

VIA

The Canadian is continuing its recent practice of bringing unusual motive power to the coast. On July 20, train #l's A-B-A set of F units was followed by an Alco RS-10 #8576 still in the C.P. maroon paint scheme.

('Looking Back' cont'd)
The unit was apparently having mechanical difficulties as it ran much rougher than even an Alco would be expected to run. The unit was seen July 25 in the Drake Street Roundhouse where its' mechanical problems were being assessed. It then went out to Coquitlam as part of C.P. Rail's Family Days.

In an unprecedented move, the Federal Government and VIA Rail have announced major cutbacks. No public hearing will be held (VIA's corporate structure is such that it is not required by law to have changes approved by regulatory bodies), and the reductions are to be completed by mid November.
For the record, the routes affected in the West and Atlanic regions are:
- The Super Continental - discontinued, eliminating all service between Vancouver-Jasper, and transcontinental service on the northern Ontario route between Sudbury-Ottawa-Montreal Transcontinental passengers from Van- couver will ride The Canadian to Toronto, then transfer to continue to Montreal or Ottawa.
- Prairie portions of CN's line will be replaced by Edmonton-Saskatoon and Regina-Saskatoon-Winnipeg Dayliner services.
- The Atlantic Ltd discontinued - the faster and more direct route from Montreal to the Maritimes.
- Edmonton-Drumheller tr. 694/659 - discontinued.
- Regina-Saskatoon-Prince Albert tr. 680/683 - discontinued, although Regina-Saskatoon will still have service.

Services being eliminated will be offered to the various provinces should they wish to fund the operations and keep the trains running.
A campaign protesting the cuts and the way they were arbitrarily made is under way, and could develop into a full scale war before this whole thing is settled. Although Mr. Pepin seems to think public hearings are not necessary, it would appear he will hear lots more on this topic yet.

In the wake of extensive cuts in passenger rail service by the Federal Government, Alberta has announced it is investigating the possibility of establishing its own high speed rail service between Calgary and Edmonton. Specs being looked at would see 200 Kph speed (making the 288 Km trip in 2 hours), downtown to downtown service, and capacity of at least eight 117 seat B737 jets.

AMTRAK
The AMTRAK cuts originally proposed by the Reagan administration have been dramatically reduced. Instead of reducing AMTRAK to corridor service New York-Boston- Washington D.C. only, the majority of the current system will

(Looking Back' cont'd)
remain in operation. The current figure being bantied around is a 15% reduction - although at this point we're not sure whether we're talking in dollars, trains or miles. We hope to be able to provide a complete sunmary of the situation next month.

That the passenger rail system is a viable transportation mode, and that it provides an alternative in times of emergency has once again been illustrated. The action by (and then against) the Air Traffic Controllers has seriously disrupted air traffic in both Canada and the U.S. Once again, AMTRAK has been operating at peak capacity across the continent to move as many as they can. It's a disruption that may last a long time - and may see many travelers have a new view of rail transportation.

WP&Y RR

The restoration of White Pass and Yukon narrow guage 2-8-2 #73 is nearing completion at Whitehorse. Steam tests are now scheduled for this September. Contrary to earlier reports that the locomotive would be used on tourist trains out of Skagway, the latest has her slated for operations in the Whitehorse area in 1982.

Royal Hudson

Royal Hudson #2860 is expected to be back in service Aug.13, following replacement of a cracked driver tire. The crack in the right front driver tire was discovered at North Vancouver on Monday, July 20 during an inspection of the locomotive. During its time out of service, the Royal Hudson excursion train was hauled by 2-8-0 #3716. The cracked tire touched off a rather unusual process - where to obtain a 726 Kg. replacement tire, and how and where to do the work. After investigating the possibilities of obtaining a tire from another Royal Hudson in a museum, it was found that a new one could be rolled for less money - at a steel mill 15 miles frcm Philidelphia, Pennsylvania. The unusual order was placed - a rush order for two tires (we'll now have a spare) and arrangements made to air freight one to Vancouver. The next decision was to bring the locomotive to Drake St. - the only place with proper facilities for the removal of a steam locomotive drive wheel. So #2860 was barged across the inlet July 28, then gingerly towed through the tunnel to the Drake St. roundhouse. There, the wheel was removed, and sent to Burrard-Yarrcws where the new tire would be fitted.

#3716

While substituting for the Royal Hudson, #3716 pulled a special train to the new Porteau Cove Provincial Park opening on July 28. A full train of about 15 cars made the trip, which departed North Vancouver around noon and returned at approx. 18:30. At the site, government officials dedicated the new Park's name.

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ISSN 1204-072X
RMBC News Vol. 66 - Issue #3

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Note: WCRA volunteers: Do not forget to send your volunteer hours for 2026 to donna@wcra.org. Deadline is February 28th, 2027.

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CP's ' Royal Canadian Pacific' at Ottertail Bridge
Sept. 3rd, 2026. Photo by: Ken Storey



Published by the West Coast Railway Assoc.-visitrmbc.org ISSN 1204-072 X

– Volume 66 - Issue #3

P.O. Box 2387, Stn. Main, Squamish, B.C. V8B 0B6 Canada Post Publications Mail Sales Agreement #40007853