



Coming Home to Moose Jaw

After two years' absence, Saskatchewan's only operating steam locomotive has returned to Moose Jaw. The 1914 Vulcan locomotive on the Short Line Railway is all steamed up, ready to take visitors for rides around the grounds of the Moose Jaw Western Development Museum. Join us at 1:00 pm on Saturday, June 18 as we celebrate the inaugural run.

Ninety-seven years ago Vulcan Iron Works in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania shipped the shiny new narrow gauge locomotive to southwestern Alberta. For the next few years, the Vulcan worked in the coal mines at Hillcrest Collieries in the Crowsnest Pass. From there it went to Alsask, on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, where it hauled hopper cars loaded with sodium sulphate from a salt lake bed to the Saskatchewan Minerals dehydration plant. The Vulcan moved again, to another sodium sulphate mine at Bishopric near Old Wives Lake southwest of Moose Jaw. The locomotive ended its working life as a steam heating unit for the Bishopric plant.

Fortunately, the Vulcan did not fall victim to the cutting torch, a fate that befell thousands of steam locomotives in the 1950s and 1960s. Instead, the engine was acquired by the Western Development Museum in 1958. Rebuilt in 1978 as engine 101 on the Short Line, the Vulcan steamed along a track on the Moose Jaw WDM grounds, to the delight of visitors. The late 1980s saw another overhaul of the engine, but by 2008, the little engine needed a new boiler.

In 2009 the WDM commissioned a new boiler for the Vulcan. The engine was dismantled at the WDM Curatorial Centre in Saskatoon and a new boiler built by Saskatoon Boiler. For the past several months, Curatorial Centre staff and volunteers have rebuilt the Vulcan, restoring the mechanical components to top notch shape, repairing the cab, painting, installing and fitting the boiler to the running gear, installing the pressure piping, and dozens of other details. Today, the Vulcan looks like new.

A dedicated and enthusiastic group of WDM Steam and Rail Volunteers looks forward to running and maintaining the Short Line for years to come. Weekend visitors to the Moose Jaw WDM have a treat in store as they board the Short Line for an experience possible nowhere else in the province.

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For more information, please call Kathy Fitton, Manager, WDM History of Transportation, Moose Jaw, 693-5989