



Western Development Museum  
Curatorial Centre

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WDM BLACKSMITHING COURSE HITS MAJOR MILESTONE**

What began as a small class in 1988 to preserve the traditional art of blacksmithing is hitting a major milestone on January 8-10, 2016. Volunteer instructors will be teaching the 100th Introduction to Blacksmithing course.

Since 1988, the allure of fire in the forge and the mystery of shaping hot metal have drawn curious learners to explore the old trade. The introductory blacksmith course is offered in a weekend format during the winter season. Basic forging techniques are taught, including flattening, squaring, splitting, bending and welding. Early graduates of the course formed the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Western Canadian Blacksmiths Guild.

The course was developed by Rick Dixon, a former WDM employee and accomplished blacksmith. While still working at the WDM, Rick noticed a growing interest in this heritage craft and suggested that the WDM offer an introductory course. Rick has been the chief instructor for nearly every course with the assistance of Museum volunteers who are also members of the Western Canadian Blacksmith Guild - Saskatchewan Chapter. For the past several years, Rick has been assisted by Murray Stachura and Mont Wilkins who are past students in the course.

"100 introductory blacksmith workshops is a noteworthy achievement for the WDM," stated Joan Champ, CEO. "Our blacksmithing classes are incredibly popular and have also increased the Museum's stature internationally. As long as people want to take our courses, we will continue to offer both basic and advanced blacksmith training as part of the WDM's mandate to preserve the history of Saskatchewan."

The WDM is committed to preserving traditional skills and offers several training courses throughout the year. Blacksmithing both introduction and advanced, Sculptural Beadwork, Steam Traction and Steam Locomotive Operation and Wheelwrighting are offered at the Curatorial Centre in Saskatoon each year.

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For more information:

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