



Western Development Museum
Saskatoon

2610 Lorne Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 0S6

P: 306-931-1910
W: wdm.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2017

**CELEBRATING 30 YEARS!
EATON'S ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY EXHIBIT NOW OPEN
AT THE WDM SASKATOON**

Children's noses pressed against cold windows, watching in wonder as sparkling characters danced and animals nodded. During the years following the Second World War, Canadians who shopped at Eaton's in cities like Winnipeg and Toronto were treated to windows full of Christmas scenes. Carols piped to the street wrapped the windows in the magical sounds of Christmas. It is these window displays that make up the Western Development Museum's *Once Upon a Christmas* display.

Built in 1946 for the Eaton's store in Winnipeg, the mechanical figures are powered by war surplus materials. Appearing in the Portage Avenue windows of the downtown Winnipeg store, the displays complemented the annual Santa Claus parade. The figurines, built from Plaster-of-Paris, danced and pranced under power provided by the surplus air force navigational motors.

After many years, the scenes were put into storage in 1976 when they were divided and sold to Eaton's stores in Saskatoon, Regina and Thunder Bay. In 1977, the Eaton's store in Saskatoon purchased all the units and put them together on the second floor of their Midtown Plaza store where they appeared annually until 1984. In 1987, the displays were donated to the Western Development Museum - Saskatoon.

In the first year, WDM staff and volunteers racked up 3,000 hours mending, painting, and repairing mechanical parts and electrical wiring. Over the years the volunteers continue to maintain the exhibit, repairing the clothing, knitting new scarves, refurbishing paper surfaces and lettering.

Every holiday season for the past 30 years the figures bob and nod, twirl and tumble for 500 hours, so visitors young and old can wonder in amazement and secretly wish for Santa! *Eaton's Once Upon a Christmas* is open through January 7, 2018.

-30-

For more information:

Jason B. Wall, Manager
WDM Saskatoon
Ph: 306-931-1910
jwall@wdm.ca
wdm.ca