



JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025 • VOLUME 49, EDITION 3

SPARKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT MUSEUM



Steamed Up

Antique steam at the WDM

Summer Fun

Lots to see at the WDM

From Treaties to Bison

New exhibits this summer

Here is What is Happening at the WDM

WDM Moose Jaw

July 1 – September 30	<i>Lii Buffalo: A Métis Way of Life</i> , a travelling exhibit from Arts and Heritage Foundation of St. Albert & Elk Island National Park
July 17, 20, August 10, 22	Gallery Pop Up activities
July 19	<i>Red River Cart</i> exhibit opening, 2:00 pm
July 26 – 27	Brickspo*
August 9	Blow Off Some Steam
August 9 – 10	Saskatchewan Open Farm Days

WDM North Battleford

July 8 – August 21	Tipi Teachings in partnership with Kanaweyimik Child & Family Services. Select days and times
August 1 – 1	Buffalo Wild Walk
August 1 – September 30	Corn Maze
August 16 – 17	History in Motion
September 6 – December 2	<i>Money in 10 Questions: Kids Edition</i> , a travelling exhibit from the Bank of Canada Museum
September 19 – 20	Spooky Corn Maze

WDM Saskatoon

Through September 30	Thursday Night Demonstrations, 5:00 – 7:30 pm
July 4 – August 31	Heritage Demonstrations, Friday – Sunday, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
July 12	Summer Fun Day
July 15, August 19 & September 16	Pop in and Play with the WDM
August 9	Saskatchewan Open Farm Days

WDM Yorkton

July 1	July 1 Picnic and Celebration, 12:00 – 4:00 pm
July 6 & 19	Movies at the Museum with the Yorkton Film Festival, 1:00 – 4:00 pm
July 9	Museum Day, 1:00 – 4:00 pm
July 12 & 23, August 21	Artifact Discovery Family Programming
August 2 – 3	67th Annual Threshermen's Show & Seniors' Festival
September 7	Grandparents' Day programming

* Not a WDM organized event

Events and dates listed here are subject to change. For details visit wdm.ca



Celebrate Saskatchewan

Dear Friends of the WDM,

There is so much to celebrate about life in Saskatchewan - from the beauty of the land to the strength and creativity of its people. As our province marks its 120th anniversary this year, it's the perfect time to reflect on what makes Saskatchewan special - and to recognize the spirit, innovation and community that continue to shape our story.

At the WDM, we are proud to be a place where Saskatchewan's rich history comes to life. This summer, we invite you to celebrate with us - whether you're attending a special event, riding the province's only operating steam train at the WDM Moose Jaw or exploring exhibits that highlight the ingenuity and resilience of everyday people.

We're also shining a spotlight on some of the remarkable individuals who embody the Saskatchewan spirit by honouring the spirit of our volunteers, innovators, leaders and inventors - individuals who have shaped our community. We would like to acknowledge the 70th anniversaries of our oldest volunteer clubs - the Yorkton Threshermen's Club and the Pioneer Threshermen's Club at the WDM Saskatoon.

Through our exhibits, artifacts and the voices we amplify, we're celebrating the creativity and resourcefulness that have long defined life in this province. We invite you to explore these stories - and to become part of them. One meaningful way to do this is through our Community Membership program, which offers a chance to connect your community with Saskatchewan's heritage in a lasting way.

Thank you for supporting the WDM. Together, let's celebrate Saskatchewan - its history, its people and its future.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "J" being large and stylized.

Joan Kanigan, CEO

Sparks is published four times a year and delivered to WDM members. It's a great way to keep up to date on everything happening at all WDM locations.

Editor: Corinne Daelick

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Development Museum

On the Cover:
Threshermen's Show & Seniors'
Festival, WDM Yorkton

In This Edition . . .

6 Celebrating Agricultural History

The Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival has been a staple at the WDM Yorkton since 1955. Thanks to the dedication of the Yorkton Threshermen's Club along with other volunteers and WDM staff, the Show is still going strong.

9 All Steamed Up

Antique steam has a long tradition at the WDM. Meet Chief Steam Engine Operator Kevin Ackerman and volunteer Matt Weber, a couple of the people who keep the WDM's engines chugging along.

20 Dief the Chief and the WDM

Canada's 13th Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, was a proud Saskatchewanian. Although politics took him to Ottawa and around the world, he loved to come home. Read about a few of Diefenbaker's trips home.

13

Summer at the WDM & Removable Fridge Calendar

Look for a variety of activities and events taking place at the WDM this summer. From kids' summer camps to pop up activities in our galleries to demonstrations with our Operating Collection, there will be something for everyone.

WDM Board of Directors

Orlanda Drebit
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Brianna Lobb
Regina

Brian Martynook
Moose Jaw

JayDee Mazier
Saskatoon

Hours of Operation

WDM Moose Jaw
Daily 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

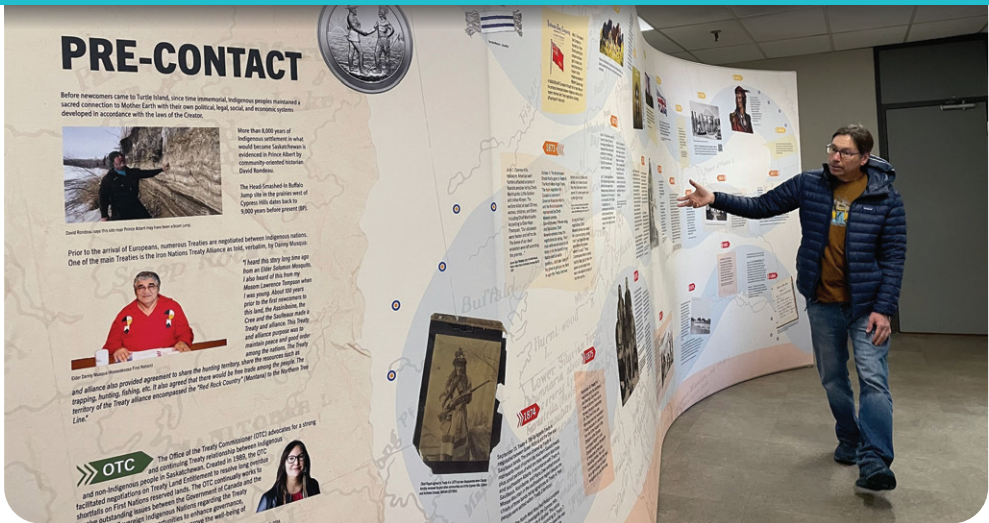
WDM Yorkton
Through September 28
Daily 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

From September 29
Weekdays 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Weekends 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

WDM North Battleford
Daily 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

WDM Saskatoon
Mon – Wed 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Thurs 9:00 am – 8:00 pm
Fri – Sun 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Boomtown Café (Saskatoon)
Daily 8:30 am – 3:00 pm



WDM and OTC partner on Treaty Timeline Exhibit

As part of the WDM's Truth and Reconciliation efforts, we are excited to announce an opportunity to learn about the Numbered Treaties in partnership with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC). A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the OTC and the WDM in 2023. One of our first projects together is the newly designed Treaty Timeline exhibit, a 'pop-up' display of the comprehensive history of Treaty-making in what is now known as Saskatchewan, developed by the OTC and redesigned by the WDM.

The WDM recognizes that the human history of Saskatchewan extends back thousands of years before 1905. As such, the histories that we share in our Museum must be inclusive of the long history of First Nations and Métis people that predates 1905. The histories of the Numbered Treaties are an integral part of that history.

The WDM aims to provide a safe space where everyone can learn about the Treaties, which is an important part of Reconciliation efforts underway in Saskatchewan. Treaty education is included in the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report and is mandatory for Kindergarten – Grade 12 students in Saskatchewan. We hope visitors will learn more about Treaty history in our Museum and that educators will make use of the pop-up exhibit to support their Treaty teaching goals.

Here's when you'll find the Treaty Timeline on display at the WDM:

WDM Saskatoon
July 7 – September 30, 2025

WDM Moose Jaw
October 13, 2025 – January 3, 2026

WDM North Battleford
January 19 – April 10, 2026

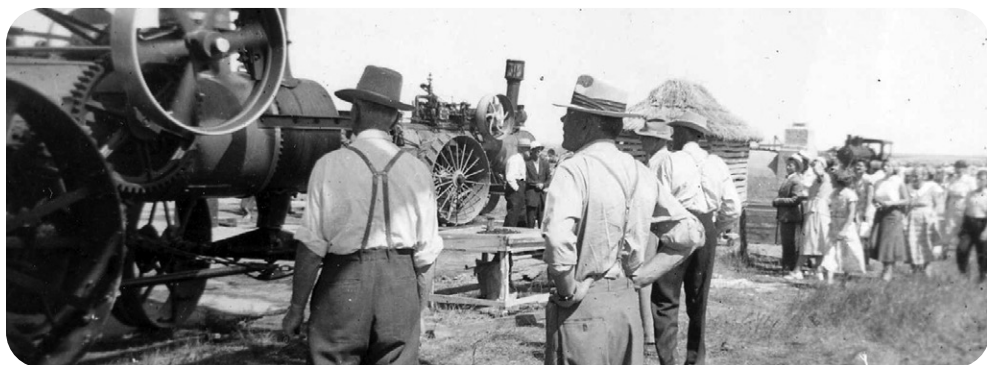
WDM Yorkton
April 27 – August 9, 2026

Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival

A WDM tradition since 1955

These colourful mechanical giants snorted and puffed across the Yorkton prairie Wednesday at the Threshermen's reunion as pioneers got together to show how the old-time machinery brought in crops in the early days. The tractors are part of the display at the Western Development Museum which is a show place of prairie inventiveness.

So proclaimed the Regina Leader-Post in its August 19, 1955 edition. Above this caption was a photo of a row of WDM steam and gas tractors from the early 20th century. On August 17, 1955, the WDM Yorkton hosted their first Threshermen's Show which included agricultural and cultural demonstrations. According to the Leader-Post, "Yorkton's population more than doubled when an estimated 7,000 to 8,000 persons descended on the city to attend the threshermen's reunion, Pion-Era and evening jamboree."



The first Show when the WDM was located at the Yorkton airport, 1955



The Gaar Scott steam engine got in some trouble during the first Show, 1955

Saskatchewan was in a celebratory mood in 1955. It was the province's Golden Jubilee – 50 years since the creation of the province. Throughout the year, many special events and homecomings were held including threshermen's reunions at the WDMs Yorkton and Saskatoon. These reunions recognized Saskatchewan's agricultural and settlement history. The Yorkton show, originally called Pion-Era Day and Old-Time Threshermen's Reunion, took place at the WDM's location at the Yorkton airport. It was organized by WDM volunteers and representatives from the City of Yorkton and the Jubilee planning committee. The day would include a variety of threshing, plowing and other farming demonstrations, operation of antique (in this case, 50 year old) farm machinery, bread baking in a clay oven and a variety of competitions. The day was capped off with a street dance including the best costume and dance contests. An estimated 4,000 people attended the street dance which took place on Broadway Street in Yorkton.

Seventy years later, what was meant to be a one-time event is still around, now known as the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival. And the volunteer group who was part of organizing that first event still exists too. Then they were known as the Pioneer Threshermen's Club but today they are known as the Yorkton Threshermen's Club, a name they've used since 1979.

The Show, as it is known by volunteers and WDM staff, took place at the Yorkton airport from 1955 – 73. In August 1972, the WDM moved to their new location on Highway 16 (now Highway 16A). After one last show at the airport in 1973, it has taken place on the Museum grounds ever since. During this time, the Show continued to focus on threshing and plowing as well as adding blacksmithing, grain grinding and a sawmill. In 1977, the East Central District New Horizons Club joined the WDM and the Threshermen's Club as an event co-host. This led to a change in the Show's formal name to the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival. In the 1980s, the Show moved from September to the August long weekend and has been held on this weekend ever since.

The Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival Steering Committee plans the Show almost as soon as the previous year's show is complete. The Steering Committee includes the WDM, the Threshermen's Club and the Yorkton Classic Auto Club. Along with agricultural demonstrations, the Show features heritage skills demonstrations like quilting and old-fashioned



Volunteers Doreen and Ivis Hoffman promote the Show in the Yorkton Canada Day parade, 1975

PHOTO CREDIT: CHELLAN HOFFMAN



Plowing demonstration, 2007

ice cream making. There are still tractor races and stooking competitions as well as children's activities, and musical and cultural entertainment. Volunteers also create special exhibits which are only on display during the Show. Most recently, special exhibits have included the 75th anniversary of the WDM and the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force. In 2025, they will feature a look back in time with *The Family Garden*, as well as *80 Years of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan*.

The largest Show took place on September 27 – 28, 1980 and was a celebration of Saskatchewan's 75th year as a province. The 1980 Show attracted an incredible 18,000 visitors. Film crews from Sask Media and the CBC were on hand to film much of the Show. Two years later, approximately 11,000 people attended the Show which also commemorated

the 100th anniversary of Yorkton. Another significant milestone was when the American Bus Association named the Show as one of their Top 100 Attractions in North America.

With the exception of 2020 – 22 when the Show was cancelled due to concerns about COVID-19, the Show has run continuously since 1955. This is thanks to the dedication of volunteers and staff. Thanks to these people, the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival continues to be a much-loved summer event at the WDM. We are extremely grateful to the volunteers and staff who contribute thousands of hours to make the Show an event that everyone can enjoy.

On **August 2 – 3**, come on down to the WDM Yorkton to see what it's all about!

Steamed Up at the WDM

The WDM has been steamed up for a long time! We have a history of operating steam traction engines in farming demonstrations, training new engineers about safe steam operation and taking visitors on train rides pulled by our Vulcan steam locomotive at the WDM Moose Jaw. Thanks to our dedicated - and a little bit steam-obsessed - staff and volunteers, we've been able to share the magic of steam engines with our visitors for many years. In this issue of *Sparks*, we'll introduce you to a few of these people and hear their "steamy" stories.

From Classroom to Engine: Chief Steam Engine Operator Kevin Ackerman

Let's meet Kevin Ackerman, the WDM's new Chief Steam Engine Operator. Each spring, our steam engines go through inspections with the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan. Once they pass their inspections, Kevin and his stellar crew of steam-certified volunteers make sure the engines stay in top operating condition for the summer.

Like many steam operators, once Kevin got up close with antique steam he was hooked. He was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time when the opportunity to work with steam presented itself.

"My time with the WDM began innocently enough, and this turned into a part-time endeavour. I was instructing a Power Engineering Technician (4th Class) course in 2015 and decided to take the class on a field trip to the WDM Saskatoon to see the antique boilers. The lecture I was supposed to present on the history of boilers was pictures and a PowerPoint. How boring would this be? I arranged a tour of the WDM Saskatoon and the Curatorial and Corporate Services Centre. I definitely got interested and in 2017, I enrolled in the WDM's Steam Traction Engine Operation Course and Steam Locomotive



Kevin on the Vulcan locomotive

Training Course. After successfully completing the courses and earning my steam ticket (provincial certification in antique steam operation), I began to volunteer when the WDM needed steam engine operators. I continued taking power engineering students for our annual antique boiler tour throughout my instructing time. I also continued volunteering my summers with the steam program. Ten years later, this led to me applying for and being hired as the WDM's Chief Steam Engine Operator."

Be sure to say hi to Kevin and our crew of steam volunteers when you see steam engines operating at the WDM this summer.

History, Steam Engines & Volunteering

Meet WDM Yorkton & Moose Jaw volunteer Matt Weber

Among our dedicated volunteers are a few who give their time at more than one WDM location. Matt Weber is one of these volunteers. Matt started as a volunteer at the WDM Yorkton in 2004 and formally joined the Yorkton Threshermen's Club (YTC) in 2005. After moving to Moose Jaw, he began volunteering at the WDM Moose Jaw as well. Matt helps with a variety of tasks from maintaining equipment, setting up fences and stacking firewood to being part of the YTC executive and managing their Facebook page. However, the bulk of Matt's volunteer time is spent on steam engines. Let's meet Matt and hear about his time with the WDM.

I was really interested in the WDM and the YTC because as a farm kid, the farm aspect and machinery really drew me in. Even from a young age, I was really interested in history and the preservation of history. The WDM and the YTC gave me both.

As the years have passed, I still love operating and demonstrating the machinery but I've pivoted and opened up to where it is really the stories that keep me going. These could be stories about the machine I am operating or speaking to spectators about where they or their parents/grandparents used a piece of machinery or stories of horses, hard times, railways and so on. One of the best things is to see a grandparent and grandchild as they look on and watch our demonstrations, tell their stories and you can see the smiles begin to form as they recount old memories and piece together the connection between the person and the machine of days gone by.

I got my steam ticket [provincial certification to operate antique steam engines] in 2014. Steam has been huge for me. I have operated engines at all WDM locations. My work on steam engines includes helping to bring the Waterloo steam engine at the WDM Yorkton back into operation and helping to restore the 75 Case in Moose Jaw. I continue to help with

the maintenance and operation of the steam engines in both Yorkton and Moose Jaw.

I started volunteering at the WDM Moose Jaw in fall 2017. I had relocated to Moose Jaw for school and it just made sense for me to continue my volunteering at the WDM Moose Jaw. I have helped for several years with the delivery of the WDM steam traction engine and steam locomotive training courses - watching the engines and showing students the safe and practical operation and maintenance procedure for operating



The YTC congratulate Matt on achieving his steam ticket, July 31, 2014



Matt with his family, wife Natasha Berriault, Lillian and Owen, at the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival 2024. Fellow volunteer Orin Popoff manages the steam engine in the background, August 4, 2024



Matt on the Short Line 101 locomotive with (L-R) Chief Steam Engine Operator Kevin Ackerman, steam volunteer Orin Popoff, Matt and steam volunteer Len Mellstrom Jr., May 7, 2025

historical boilers and traction engines, as well as safe operation of the K+S Potash Canada Short Line 101 locomotive.

One of the things I enjoy most about volunteering is the many long-term friends I have made from the steam and gas tractor worlds. These relationships would not have been possible without my involvement in the WDM. The volunteers never cease to amaze me as they bring their skills to the table in everything they do. The best part is that they are so open and willing to pass on those skills to others.

Beyond the people, I enjoy the constant challenge of keeping the machinery operating and as original as possible as parts deteriorate and become scarce. This challenge along with the drive to preserve and demonstrate as much of Saskatchewan's agricultural history as possible keeps me going. The steam engines, the course I help with, the gas tractors are simply tools with a story to help achieve this goal.

One thing I always strive to do during the Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival

[held at the WDM Yorkton in August] is to come early and stay late. It helps me get a few things done and there is a peace that comes with it. The grounds are normally full of the hustle and bustle that comes with a large event. But there are those moments early in the morning as the sun is coming up and the dew is coming off, or in the evenings as the sun sets and the coolness of the evening comes in. You see the sun setting as the sky shifts to twilight, the boiler pops and crackles as it cools and there is no one around. Or the early mornings that sometimes happen during the show where the fires are lit early and there is a drizzle of rain on the tin roof and that is the only sound you hear. It takes me to a place of peace and all the worries fade away as you prepare for another day teaching others and showcasing history.

This is what it is all about.

Thanks, Matt for sharing your passion for Saskatchewan's agricultural history with us and for sharing your skills and knowledge with WDM visitors!



Vic helping out with the Museum Days school program at the WDM Saskatoon, 2019



Vic volunteering at Pion-Era at the WDM Saskatoon, 2010

With Gratitude to the Estate of Victor Cookman

The WDM is deeply grateful to the estate of Victor (Vic) Cookman for their generous donation.

Vic was a dedicated volunteer at the WDM for over 20 years. He especially loved his time in the carpentry shop at the WDM Saskatoon, where he crafted gifts and shared his skills with others.

He was generous with his time and talent – whether that was helping on a construction project or helping with set up for a school program. We fondly remember Vic's kindness and patience as he helped students learn hands-on heritage skills in the Museum Days school program.

Over the years, Vic formed lasting friendships within the WDM community and treasured the connections he made. His memories of the Museum were full of meaning, pride and joy.

His legacy lives on in the work he did, the people he touched and now, through this generous gift that will help sustain the WDM for future generations. The donation will support ongoing programming and maintenance of the WDM, including the carpentry shop – a place Vic loved – ensuring it continues to connect generations to our shared past.

Be Part of Our Story: Donate to the WDM!

Your donation helps keep the WDM as a place to connect with our shared history – today and into the future.

Donations can be made online at wdm.ca/donate, or by phone at 306-934-1400 or 1-800-363-6345.

Scan the QR code to go to our donation form.



Summer at the WDM

Jazzy July and Awesome August Activities

Look for a variety of activities and events taking place at the WDM this summer. From kids' summer camps to pop up activities in our galleries to demonstrations with our Operating Collection, there will be something for everyone.

WDM Moose Jaw

Brickspo

July 26 – 27, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

See amazing LEGO® creations from the Saskatchewan LEGO® Users Group and others from across western Canada. Take in special events and talks.

Blow Off Some Steam

August 9, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Learn about the history of how the railway was built and how steam trains operated. See our 75 Class steam traction engine, take part in a steam-themed scavenger hunt. Weather permitting the K+S Potash Canada Short Line 101 will be running. Regular ticket fares apply; limited ride capacity.



Open Farm Days

August 9, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

August 10, 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

The WDM Moose Jaw is taking part in Saskatchewan Open Farm Days - an annual event that encourages the sharing of Saskatchewan agriculture stories. Everyone is invited to learn about where their food comes from through activities around the province. Join us for some farm-themed fun.

WDM North Battleford

Tipi Teachings

Selected dates through July – August

In partnership with Kanaweyimik Child & Family Services, a temporary collection of traditional tipis is on display along with a variety of teachings on select days. For a full list of dates and teachings, scan the QR code here:



Corn Maze

August 1 – September 30

Lose yourself in the twists and turns of the corn maze in the *Heritage Farm and Village*. On September 19 – 20 it becomes a Spooky Corn Maze.

History in Motion

August 16 – 17, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Travel back in time with vintage fire truck and wagon rides, children's activities, entertainment, demonstrations, the Parade of Power and more.



Summer Fun Fridge Calendar

Take this calendar out of Sparks and stick it to your fridge to keep track of events and activities at the WDM!

WDM Moose Jaw

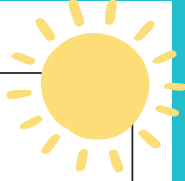
WDM North Battleford

WDM Saskatoon

WDM Yorkton

Jazzy July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 July 1 Picnic	2	3 Heritage Skills Demonstrations	4	5
6 Movies at the Museum Heritage Skills Demos	7 Heritage Farm and Village Summer Camp *	8 Karaweyimik Child & Family Services Tipi Teachings Transportation Summer Camp *	9 Museum Day Karaweyimik Child & Family Services Tipi Teachings	10 Heritage Skills Demonstrations	11	12 Summer Fun Day Artifact Discovery
13 Heritage Skills Demos	14 Heritage Farm and Village Summer Camp *	15 Pop In and Play	16	17 Summer Pop Up Karaweyimik Child & Family Services Tipi Teachings Heritage Skills Demonstrations	18	19 Red River Cart opening Movies at the Museum
20 Summer Pop Up Heritage Skills Demos	21 Heritage Farm and Village Summer Camp *	22 Karaweyimik Child & Family Services Tipi Teachings	23 Artifact Discovery	24	25	26 Bricksbo
27 Bricksbo Heritage Skills Demos	28 Karaweyimik Child & Family Services Tipi Teachings Heritage Farm and Village Summer Camp *	29 Hands On Heritage Camp *	30	31 Heritage Skills Demonstrations Heritage Skills Demos		



Awesome August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Tipi Teachings Summer Camp * Summer Camp * Heritage Skills Demonstrations	2 Threshermen's Show & Seniors' Festival
3 Threshermen's Show & Seniors' Festival Heritage Skills Demos	4	5	6	7	8 Heritage Skills Demonstrations	9 Blow Off Some Steam Open Farm Days Open Farm Days
10 Summer Pop Up Open Farm Days Heritage Skills Demos	11	12 Kanaweyimik Child & Family Services Tipi Teachings Heritage Summer Camp * Blast From The Past Summer Camp * Heritage Farm and Village Summer Camp * Hands On Heritage Camp *	13	14 Heritage Skills Demonstrations	15 Heritage Skills Demonstrations	16 History in Motion
17 History in Motion Heritage Skills Demos	18	19 Pop In and Play Kanaweyimik Child & Family Services Tipi Teachings	20	21 Artifact Discovery Heritage Skills Demonstrations	22 Summer Pop Up Heritage Skills Demonstrations	23
24 Heritage Skills Demos	25	26	27	28 Heritage Skills Demonstrations	29 Heritage Skills Demonstrations	30
31 Heritage Skills Demos						



For more details including program times, scan the **QR code** or visit **wdm.ca/events**.

* **Note:** Pre-registration is required for all summer camps.



Summer at the WDM

Jazzy July and Awesome August Activities

WDM Saskatoon

Summer Heritage Demonstrations

Through August 31

Thursdays, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

Fridays – Sundays, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Watch Boomtown come to life with heritage skills demonstrations such as blacksmithing, rope making, Morse telegraphy and more.

Summer Fun Day

July 12, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Experience antique machines from our collection, kids' games, musical performances and lots to see in the Museum galleries. Admission by donation.

Pop In and Play

July 15, August 19 & September 16

Children can connect with the WDM and our hands-on artifacts in a fun and interactive way. Activities are designed for ages 2 – 6 with visitors of all ages welcome.



WDM Yorkton

July 1 Picnic and Celebration

July 1, 12:00 – 4:00 pm

Join the WDM and our community partners for our annual picnic. Entertainment includes a tipi display and drummer, traditional Indian dance, martial arts demonstrations and more. Everyone will enjoy old-fashioned games, wagon rides, an antique car show and a showcase of local artists.

Museum Day

July 9, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Come out for a family-friendly afternoon full of crafts, hands-on activities and more. Plus, you can add your name to our friendship quilt and explore the galleries.

67th Annual Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival

August 2 – 3, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Volunteers from the Yorkton Threshermen's Club and the WDM will be running vintage equipment from the WDM Operating Collection. Join us for demonstrations of threshing, plowing, flour grinding and rolled oats, blacksmithing, the Story of Harvest, antique tractor displays and parade, and so much more.



Thank You Supporters

WDM 75th Anniversary Passport

Our 75th Anniversary Passport Contest came to a close in April. Thanks to everyone who visited during our 75th anniversary year and a special thanks to those who completed their passports by visiting all four WDM locations between April 2, 2024 – April 2, 2025. The folks who completed their passports came from six different provinces and two American states.



All completed passports were entered into a draw on April 30, and the winner was Elizabeth S. of Saskatoon. Elizabeth’s favourite exhibit is *Time Square* at the WDM Yorkton, where visitors can play with traditional toys and handle objects from the past.

Elizabeth headed to the WDM Saskatoon to pick up her prize package, which included a WDM family membership, Sask-made items from our gift shops, a WDM Activity Book and other WDM goodies, and a sock monkey donated by the WDM Saskatoon Women’s Auxiliary.

Immediately after collecting her prize, Elizabeth took her new sock monkey for a tour through the Museum. Thank you to all who participated and celebrated 75 years of preserving Saskatchewan history!

- True or False
1. True – Dr. Bricker finished 3rd in long jump and 4th in the triple jump.
 2. False – Tommy Douglas was the longest-serving premier at 17 years and 4 months. Brad Wall served as premier for 10 years and 3 months.
 3. True – A limited number of students paid tuition with feed grain to feed animals on the University’s farm.
 4. False – The white birch became SK’s tree in 1988.
 5. False – Regina was named the provincial capital on May 23, 1906.
 6. True – On June 8, 1887, approximately 2500 acres adjacent to the shoreline at the north end of Last Mountain Lake were set aside as breeding grounds for wildfowl, becoming the first federal bird sanctuary in North America.



Brainbuster Answers

Search for the Saskatchewan Symbol

The Western Red Lily is on page 12.

Spot the Differences

BRAINBUSTERS

True or False

How well do you know your Saskatchewan trivia? Let's find out with these True or False questions.

1. Saskatchewan's first Olympian, Dr. Carl Bricker of Grenfell, finished 3rd in the long jump at the 1908 Summer Olympics
2. Brad Wall holds the record as the longest-serving Saskatchewan premier
3. In 1969, the University of Saskatchewan allowed some students to pay part of their tuition in feed grains
4. The white birch was adopted as Saskatchewan's provincial tree in 1978
5. Regina was named Saskatchewan's provincial capital on May 23, 1905
6. The Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary is the oldest bird sanctuary in North America

Did you know...

At 64 metres tall, 5,000 metres long, the Gardiner Dam is one of the largest earth-filled dams in the world. It took nearly a decade to construct, officially opening on July 21, 1967. Gardiner Dam along with the Qu'Appelle River Dam created Lake Diefenbaker. More than 60 per cent of Saskatchewan's population depends on Lake Diefenbaker and the South Saskatchewan River for their water supply.

That's a **Sask Fact!**

Search for the Saskatchewan Symbol

Hidden somewhere in this issue of *Sparks* is a Western Red Lily like this one. This lily is Saskatchewan's official flower. Can you find it?



Spot the Difference

The Canadian Northern Railway built a station in Prince in 1913. It was a boom time for railways in Saskatchewan with hundreds of kilometres of track laid to move prairie grain to distant markets. The Prince station was rebuilt in 1928 and was used until 1957. In 1967, it was moved to the *Heritage Farm and Village* at the WDM North Battleford where it continues to welcome visitors.

Look closely to spot **seven** differences between the exhibit scenes.



Answers on
page 17.

My WDM Story with Steve Lipsit Shannon, Saskatoon

Riding with Dief the Chief

In our January – March issue of *Sparks*, we featured Steve Lipsit Shannon's passion for steam engines and his connection to the Pioneer Threshermen's Club at the WDM Saskatoon. In this issue, Steve shares his story of meeting former prime minister, and fellow Saskatchewanian, John Diefenbaker (aka Dief the Chief). The story takes us back 50 years, when the WDM's Rumely steam engine, operated by Steve and volunteer George Dunlap, was used for the sod turning of the John G. Diefenbaker Canada Centre.

In August 1975, we were informed that the Rumely steam engine and a section of the 20-bottom plow would be transported to the future site of the Diefenbaker Canada Centre. Former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, one of my heroes, would turn the sod by pulling the throttle on the engine for his 80th birthday.

To operate a steam engine, you need an engineer and a fireman. That day, Charlie McCoy was to be the fireman but called George to say he was ill. George called me to fill in because I had done all the work getting the engine and plows ready.

The morning of September 20 was crisp and the fire from the Rumely's firebox was welcomed. It was two days after Diefenbaker's 80th birthday. Many celebrations were planned including the unveiling of the Diefenbaker Canada Centre's plaque and a unique sod turning ceremony. My mom went downtown to purchase a new pair of overalls and smock for me. I had to have new - it was the Chief!

A city bus pulled up with Diefenbaker and his entourage. I could just barely hear the ceremony from our engine when I felt a tug on my pant leg. It was Diefenbaker's personal assistant, Paul Martin. He asked me where I would be standing when Diefenbaker pulled the throttle. He suggested I stand right behind him because if he fell into the plow...I would be first.

Moments later there he was....in a pin-striped suit and wearing an engineer's hat with red neckerchief in his suit's breast pocket.



George Dunlap, the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker and Steve. Steve's parents, Don and Doris, look on in the background, September 20, 1975

PHOTO CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN, UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, A-5067

As Diefenbaker was assisted up on a wooden step to the engine platform, I took his hand to help and he introduced himself. His height surprised me! Over 6 feet tall. He looked at our engineer and stated, "We have met before now." George Dunlap replied, "Yes we did." Diefenbaker said, "It was during the Queen's Coronation tour in 1959 and you took her Majesty and me for a ride on a steam engine. Your first name is George but I apologize, I don't remember your last name but it starts with D." "Dunlap," George responded in disbelief. The Chief turned to me and said he didn't feel right, like a real engineer. He needed his

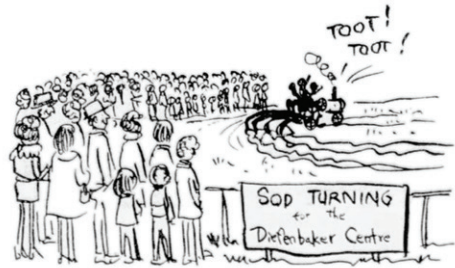


Sod turning with Diefenbaker on the throttle of the steam engine. On the plow, Dr. R.W. Begg, Tom Gauley, Roy Romanow and Sid Buckwold, September 20, 1975

PHOTO CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN, UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, A-5075

neckerchief tied around his neck like mine. He handed it to me and turned around. "Tie that up!" he barked, "And make it snug. My jowls won't break." I would give a lot of money to anyone who had a picture of me doing that!

What followed was George's instructions that when it was time, pull this lever and we would be off. There would be four people riding on the plow to drop the four bottoms. They were Saskatchewan Attorney-General Roy Romanow, Senator Sid Buckwold, university president Dr. R.W. Begg and Tom Gauley of the university board of governors. They had taken up their positions on the plow as George was explaining how to pull the throttle which Diefenbaker did immediately... but it was not time. The plow guests fell off! They jumped back on with no injuries, but the oil, soot and water blew from the steam engine stack all over the assembled media. He drove the engine down the field and asked us if we wanted to do another round. We politely said,



Cartoons of the sod turning which appeared in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, September 27, 1975

"No, Sir." As he left the engine to a mass of children waiting for autographs, he instructed us to put the engine to bed and join him at the tea immediately.

We followed his instructions and shut the engine down faster than ever before. As we entered the hall surrounded by guests dressed in business attire, Diefenbaker bee-lined his way to us. We chatted with him for well over 20 minutes about my future and the day.

A month shy of four years to the day, my mom and I would be standing on that very spot only a few feet from pallbearers carrying the Chief to his final resting place. The entire cabinet of the government was there including the Right Honourable Joe Clark, prime minister at the time, who read the eulogy.

Thanks to Steve for sharing this charming story. It highlights what made John Diefenbaker so popular – his genuine connection with people.

Diefenbaker at the WDM

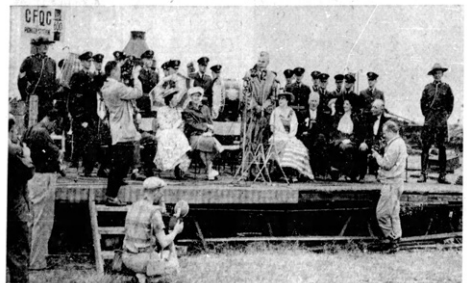
Former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker loved coming home to Saskatchewan and connecting with people. Some of these trips home included the WDM while he was Prime Minister (1957 – 63) and after. On July 1, 1958, the prime minister blew the steam whistle to officially kick off Pion-Era at the WDM Saskatoon. He and his wife Olive took in the sights enjoying a parade of antique cars and equipment. They met Pion-Era's "Pioneer of the Year," 90-year-old L.M. Bowerman of Runciman before moving along to the Indian Village, as it was known, visiting with Chief Harry Littlecrow of Whitecap Dakota Nation and Senator James Gladstone, Canada's first Indigenous senator.

Diefenbaker closed out his WDM visit by delivering his Dominion Day, now known as Canada Day, speech which was broadcast live on CBC via a new coast-to-coast microwave communications network - the Trans-Canada Microwave system. This system brought live network television and direct-dialled long-distance telephone service from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. At the time, it was the world's longest microwave network. It may be hard to imagine today but this technology made a huge impact on Canadian life and how we connected to each other. It was an honour for the WDM to be part of this historic broadcast. Learn more about this microwave system by



WDM Saskatoon Manager Gordon Wilson greets Robert Stanfield and John Diefenbaker at Pion-Era, June 15, 1968

Prime Minister Opens Pion-Era



THE men and women greeting Prime Minister and Mrs. Diefenbaker on Dominion Day at Pion-Era wore the high-fashion costume of the pioneer days. Left to right, Oliver Symes, chairman of the board of directors of Pion-Era, in top hat and swallow tail coat, obscured by a photographer is Harry Jones, MP for Saskatoon; Mrs. Oliver Symes; Mrs. Diefenbaker, the prime minister; Mrs. Harry Hay and Mr. Hay; Mrs. Sid Buckwood, representing the mayor; and Joe Phelps, managing director of Pion-Era.

Excerpt from the July 2, 1958 Saskatoon Star Phoenix showing Prime Minister Diefenbaker as he officially opens Pion-Era '58 at the WDM Saskatoon

checking out this interesting TV program from the CBC Archives that aired on June 30, 1958: www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.3594875.

By 1968, Diefenbaker was no longer Prime Minister or leader of the national Progressive Conservative (PC) party but he was still popular at home. As a prominent Saskatchewan politician, he brought new PC leader Robert Stanfield to Pion-Era during the 1968 election campaign. Diefenbaker was so comfortable at the WDM that the Saskatoon Star Phoenix declared that "it was a case of Mr. Diefenbaker as the tour leader and Mr. Stanfield as tourist."

The politicians toured the Museum grounds in a 1912 Rambler, hopped on a steam engine and even stopped for a cup of tea before heading back out on the campaign trail.

Diefenbaker in the WDM

At the WDM, we have a variety of artifacts connected to former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker including commemorative and political promotional materials. Diefenbaker's political career was slow to start. In 1920, he was working as a lawyer in Wakaw when he was elected to village council. However, initial attempts to get into provincial and federal politics were unsuccessful including losing the 1926 federal election to Mackenzie King,

the only time two future prime ministers faced each other in the same riding. Diefenbaker was elected as a Progressive Conservative (PC) member of parliament in 1940. After running unsuccessfully for the PC party leadership in 1942 and 1948, he finally became leader in 1956. He would lead the PCs to a minority government in 1957 followed by winning a majority government in the 1958 election. At the time, the 1958 victory was the largest majority in Canadian history. Diefenbaker would lead the country as Prime Minister from 1957 – 63. In 1967, he was replaced as PC leader by Robert Stanfield. Diefenbaker would stay on as a member of parliament for the constituency of Prince Albert until his death on August 16, 1979.



Diefenbaker in the 1910 IHC Auto Wagon (WDM-1973-S-218) at the WDM Saskatoon, c.1968

PHOTO CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN, UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, JOHN G. DIEFENBAKER FONDS, PHOTOGRAPH JGD-2869



Autographed John Diefenbaker election poster, WDM-2004-S-704



John Diefenbaker button on display in the 100 Years of Saskatchewan History exhibit, WDM Yorkton, WDM-2003-S-897

More To Learn and Experience

Explore new exhibits at the WDM

Join us this summer as the WDM introduces you to travelling exhibits from the Bank of Canada Museum, and from the Arts and Heritage Foundation of St. Albert and Parks Canada as well as a brand-new permanent display for the WDM Moose Jaw.

Lii Buflo: A Métis Way of Life

WDM Moose Jaw
July 1 – September 30

Lii Buflo: A Métis Way of Life showcases the historic ties and spiritual bond between the Métis people and the bison. Each of the ten



interpretive panels features the artwork of Métis artist Jesse Gouchey. Through the exhibit, visitors learn about the history of the Métis and the bison through storytelling from the Métis community and Gouchey's art. *Lii Buflo* was developed by the Arts and Heritage Foundation of St. Albert, Alberta and Elk Island National Park who worked closely with members of the St. Albert Métis community to showcase Métis stewardship, voices and stories. It is presented in English, French and Michif. Note: This exhibit will be closed from July 24 – 28.

Look for *Lii Buflo: A Métis Way of Life* on display at other WDM locations in late 2025 – 26.

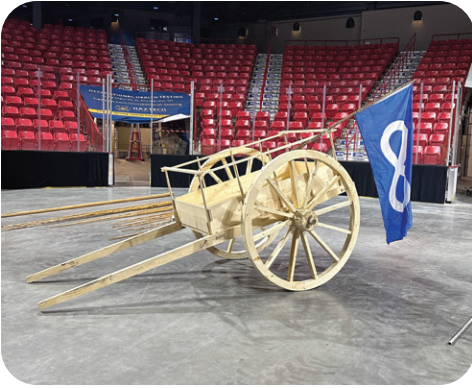
Calling All Educators!

Let the WDM help spark curiosity and imagination in your students while meeting their learning objectives. Explore our exhibits, take part in a program or try one of our hands-on activities. You never know where your students will go with what they learn.

|| As a child, the WDM was the place to go to make history seem real in a way that learning in class never quite managed. I'm looking forward to taking my own students to the WDM—ready to discover and explore Saskatchewan history.

Ewen C., Teacher Candidate

Visit wdm.ca for details about learning opportunities at the WDM.



Red River Cart

WDM Moose Jaw
Exhibit Opening – July 19, 2:00 pm

In 2017, the WDM Moose Jaw connected with New Southern Plains Métis Local #160 (NSPML) – an organization whose focus is to promote awareness of the Métis community in Moose Jaw and area. Since then, NSPML has participated in the WDM's Community Heritage Day and Museum Day as well as helping to develop a Michif word seek and find activity.

While working together, the WDM and NSPML identified the need for a full-size Red River cart at the WDM Moose Jaw. A dedicated group of volunteers from NSPML have built a replica cart for the WDM with the WDM covering the cost of materials and the volunteers donating their time and expertise. In collaboration with Gabriel Dumont Institute, the WDM created interpretive signage for the display which will go on permanent exhibit starting July 19. Thank you to all of the volunteers from NSPML for their support of this project and the WDM!

Join us at the WDM Moose Jaw for this special exhibit opening at 2:00 pm on July 19.



Money in 10 Questions: Kid's Edition

WDM North Battleford
September 6 – December 2

In 2020, the Bank of Canada Museum asked kids what they wanted to know about money. More than 800 questions flooded in from across the country. The questions were thoughtful and complex, while some were just plain fun. And the Bank of Canada Museum answered them all. *Money in 10 Questions: Kids Edition* is built around 10 of these questions, such as "Why do you have to work for money?" and "Can money be dinosaur bones?" These questions act as springboards to explore concepts that are important for children and their families to understand as they navigate through the economy. You can check out this exhibit, that is great for all ages, at the WDM North Battleford starting September 6.

Teachers: Plan a school trip to visit this fun and educational exhibit. Guiding questions and resources are available to enhance your visit.

WDM MOOSE JAW

1965 Diamond Jubilee Medal

WDM-1984-S-976

A special medal was created to celebrate Saskatchewan's 60th anniversary in 1965. Designed by Regina artist A.W. Davey, the medal consists of three elements which, according to Davey, represents the development of the province. The human figure in the centre represented the people from many lands who have worked cooperatively to develop the province. The furrows at the base represented the land that was important to Saskatchewan's agricultural economy. The gear wheel represented industrial growth and the gradual change to a more mixed economy – agriculture and industry.

This medal was donated as part of the Tannahill Harding Coin Collection. It is on display in the *100 Years of Saskatchewan History* exhibit.



WDM NORTH BATTLEFORD

Golden Jubilee Display

The Golden Jubilee marked 50 years since Saskatchewan was created as a province. Newspapers and radio carried news of festivities daily. From May – September 1955, there were, on average, four celebrations on every day somewhere in the province. Jubilee projects were undertaken including the marking of historic sites and the opening of the Museum of Natural History (now the Royal Saskatchewan Museum) in Regina.

Books, clothing, pennants, pins, license plates – pretty much anything you can imagine was branded as Golden Jubilee. Golden Jubilee fabric could be purchased and turned into bunting, shirts and skirts like the one on display in the *100 Years of Saskatchewan History* exhibit. This fabric featured scenes like mining and farming with golden wheat screen printed in the background.



WDM SASKATOON

Saskie Mascot

WDM-2002-S-692

Celebrate Saskatchewan was the theme of Saskatchewan's 75th anniversary celebration in 1980. Like other anniversary celebrations, the year was filled with reunions, parties and even a "Celebrate Saskatchewan" song. There was plenty of memorabilia too with the cuddliest being a stylized gopher called Saskie. Saskie's scientific name is a *Celebrateus Saskatchewanus* 1980.

Saskie came with special care instructions too. According to its tag "Your Saskie's physical and mental well-being depends upon being exposed to as much Celebrate Saskatchewan activity as possible. Saskie will thrive on a well-balanced diet of Saskatchewan's Heritage, combined with a few good, rousing celebrations of Saskatchewan's present." Saskie sold for \$18.95, which is over \$70 is 2025 dollars.



WDM YORKTON

Saskatchewan Centennial Quilt

WDM-2005-Y-2

To commemorate Saskatchewan's 100th anniversary as a province, in 2005 the WDM held a Centennial Quilt Contest. Four quilts would be chosen to be displayed – one at each WDM location. These quilts were original designs which reflected various aspects of the province. Twenty-nine quilts were entered from across Saskatchewan.

This quilt called "Saskatchewan - Land Of Living Skies" was created by Lydia Breitkreuz of Springside. Approximately 500 quilting hours were put into this quilt plus additional time to travel to purchase fabric. Over 300 different fabrics were used to create this work of art. Themes reflected in the quilt include the four seasons and provincial symbols such as plants, scenery and natural resources.



Western Development Museum – WDM Curatorial and Corporate Services Centre
2935 Lorne Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 0S5



WDM Curatorial and Corporate Services Centre

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please contact us at:

Phone: 306-934-1400

Toll Free: 1-800-363-6345

Email: info@wdm.ca

WDM Curatorial and Corporate Services Centre Business Hours

Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Closed statutory holidays



WDM.CA

#SaskInspired



YMCA Boys' and Girls' Fair third place
ribbon, 1937

WDM-2007-S-722