

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 2022

16/01/2022 Eastern Ontario Review Lachute

Calumet

Grenville-sur-la-Rouge wants railway company to repair roof at Calumet station
Efforts to save the old Calumet railroad station continue.

According to Grenville-sur-la-Rouge Mayor Tom Arnold, when council met on January 12, it discussed repairs required on the building, including an immediate need to repair the leaking roof. The building, located at 169 rue Principale in Calumet, is still owned by Genesee and Wyoming, the parent company of the Quebec and Gatineau Railway, which operates freight trains along the line.

"We're in negotiations with Genesee and Wyoming to get access and to get the work done," said Arnold.

The mayor estimated the repairs will cost \$5,000 to \$10,000 and are only intended as a temporary measure, needed to stabilize the structure.

The municipality would like to take ownership of the former Calumet station to restore the building and give it a new purpose as a cultural and heritage facility. In November 2021, council approved entering into negotiations with Genesee and Wyoming to purchase the vacant building.

The municipality has also designated the station as a heritage building. Arnold said the designation obliges the owners to ensure the work is done in a way that respects the heritage designation.

At its meeting on December 14, 2021, Grenville-sur-la-Rouge council adopted a by-law establishing a local heritage council to oversee heritage preservation activities across the municipality.

The railway line through Calumet was built after the creation of the Québec, Montréal, Ottawa, and Occidental railway (QMO & OR) in 1874, which was intended to serve cities and rural areas north of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers. The line was sold to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) in 1882 and passenger service on the north shore of the Ottawa River continued until 1981.

During the later years of CP passenger service, the station building itself was closed and Calumet was a flag stop – meaning that no regular stop was made unless passengers waiting on the platform signaled for the train to stop so they could board.

21/01/2022 thestar.com

Winchester

Railway Safety in North Grenville

Kemptville Ontario - On 11 Jan 2022 Mayor Nancy Peckford posted a photo of a freight train, taken by local resident Craig Stevenson, on Kemptville's community Facebook page.

The Mayor used the photo to highlight the active state of rail lines in the Municipality, urging readers to "be vigilant at all rail crossings at all times."

For many people, railways and railway crossings don't warrant so much as a fleeting thought.

We frequently pass by the raised crossing arms with no train in sight on our commutes, and may occasionally have to wait for a passing train for a few minutes before proceeding.

The only railway company operating through North Grenville is Canadian Pacific Railway (CP), whose so-called "Winchester subdivision" of their Toronto to Montreal branchline runs through east to west.

The line runs south of the Kemptville town limits and just north of Oxford Mills, missing the populated areas in the Municipality

CP recently upgraded the signaling and removed large sections of what used to be a double track line, turning the Winchester subdivision into a single track mainline with "siding" tracks, where trains can pull over to pass each other.

For this reason, locals may notice more instances of trains temporarily blocking rail crossings in remaining double track sections while they wait for another train.

Rail transportation is extremely safe, and accidents, even at grade crossings, are rare.

However, accidents at crossings have a high chance of turning deadly when they do occur, because of the sheer size and speed of trains, and their inability to stop quickly.

A freight train travelling at the maximum allowable speed will often take a kilometer or more to stop if emergency braking is applied, leaving little chance of stopping before an obstruction at a crossing, such as a car or pedestrian.

It is, therefore, incumbent on road users to be aware of rail safety.

Canada's national railway safety campaign, known as "Operation Lifesaver," uses the simple phrase, "Look. Listen. Live", to teach rail safety

"Look. Listen. Live" means exactly that.

When approaching a railway crossing, regardless of whether it has protections such as flashing lights and barricades to warn of an oncoming train, it is important to look and listen for trains to ensure it is safe to cross.

Transport Canada publishes a "Grade Crossings Inventory," classifying pertinent information about specific railway crossings in Canada, including whether they have "active" protection (i.e. lights and gates), or passive protection (i.e. signage only).

Nearly all railway crossings in North Grenville are classified as having active protection, but two stand out as having only passive protection.

One is at McGovern Road, which is crossed only by a little-used spur line of the railway, but the other is at Murphy Road, west of Oxford Mills, where a double tracked section of the mainline crosses the road with no way to warn drivers if a train is coming.

The section of road that crosses the track is considered "un-maintained," but with approximately eight fast, heavy, freight trains passing this isolated public crossing daily, anyone who travels this area should be extra careful to treat the crossing as a stop sign, and this includes off-road vehicle users as well.

Come to a complete stop, turn off the radio, and the climate control fan, and listen for an approaching train.

If no approaching train is heard, creep slowly and look for trains, and proceed only if there are none.

While protected crossings are safer, it is advisable to follow this procedure at all crossings, and note that some well-maintained busier roads in neighboring localities still only have passively protected railway crossings, one such crossing is at Crowder Road near Mountain.

Never attempt to beat a train over the crossing, waiting just a few minutes can save your life, because in a race with a train, even if it is a tie, you lose!

Pedestrian dies after being struck by train in Barrhaven

VIA Rail confirmed that Train 52, travelling between Toronto and Ottawa, was involved in an "incident" with a person at the crossing at around 1 p.m.

A pedestrian died after being struck by a VIA Rail train at a rail crossing on Jockvale Road in Barrhaven on Saturday afternoon.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada said it had deployed an investigator to probe the fatal collision.

"The TSB will gather information and assess the occurrence," said a Twitter post made just before 4 p.m.

The train track runs across Jockvale Road near Tartan Drive. Following the collision, Jockvale was closed between Tartan and Weybridge Drive, police said on social media.

VIA Rail confirmed that Train 52, travelling between Toronto and Ottawa, was involved in an "incident" with a person at the crossing at around 1 p.m.

Delays were expected for Trains 42 and 59, VIA Rail said in a statement, adding that Ottawa Police Service officials were also at the site to investigate.

The safety of rail crossings in Barrhaven has been a concern for years. The issue was given added urgency after a VIA train and a municipal double-decker bus collided near Fallowfield Road and Woodroffe Avenue in 2013, killing six people.

In 2017, a joint study by the City of Ottawa and VIA Rail concluded that grade-separated rail crossings were needed at five locations in Barrhaven, including at Jockvale Road.

The report said there should be a plan for a multi-use pathway underpass there because of the high number of pedestrians and cyclists at the location.

At the time, the work was estimated to cost about \$6 million.

04/03/2022 *Belleville Intelligencer**Kingston (CN)**Brockville*

Rail upgrades come at a noisy price

People living near Brockville's train station are not thrilled about a summer of noisy nights, but city councillors are welcoming coming upgrades to the Perth Street facility.

Council's planning and operations committee is recommending the full council grant Via Rail a nearly three-month exemption from the city's noise bylaw, to allow construction activities around the station and tracks to happen between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m., from May 15 to August 8.

Via plans to replace its platform, and improve the parking area and service connections to Perth Street.

The city's noise bylaw prohibits construction noise is from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., extending it until 9 a.m. on weekends and statutory holidays, although Via does not intend to do the work on weekends.

The bylaw also limits construction noise and equipment to a maximum of 85 decibels A (dBA) when measured at the point of reception.

The Via project manager, Juan Carlos Soneira, this week told the committee's virtual meeting the company considers the Brockville station platform one of the most important ones on its Windsor-Quebec City corridor.

"This initiative is part of the forthcoming mobilization put in service of our new trains that are arriving in Canada in 2022," he added.

Among the 49 stations of the corridor, Soneira added, Brockville's is considered 18th, getting around 31,000 passengers boarding here a year.

Via wants to ensure its platform is up to date with health and safety and accessibility standards, he added.

The company has hired Ottawa-based firm R.W. Tomlinson to do the work.

Doing the work at night makes it safer for community members as there is less traffic in the area, and also allows workers to get more done, faster, because fewer trains use the tracks in the overnight hours, said Soneira.

He added Via will have noise mitigation measures in place.

City officials gave written notice of the coming work to property owners within 120 metres of the site, making it clear that "it was the intention for the Chief Planning Officer to approve the request."

City hall got written responses from five neighbours who objected to the work. Planning officials included the responses, anonymously, in a report to the committee.

One opponent said 120 metres is too small a radius for notification.

"Noise travels and this construction work is going to disrupt many more people during the overnight than you think," the respondent wrote, adding Via "can figure something more equitable regarding the noise."

"Many residents within the 120 meters of the subject lands work during the day, Monday through Friday," another respondent wrote.

"Residents should be able to come home, rest and recoup for the following day of work. This exemption to the noise bylaw will take away that ability, for almost three months. Sleep deprivation is a real concern and should not be discounted, especially when it is over an extended period of time."

"While I understand that construction may impact the trains if conducted during the day, I don't understand why my household's quality of life should suffer over big corps making money," another opponent wrote.

"This will be during the summer months when many residents, including myself, have their windows open at night and will therefore be greatly affected by the construction noise while trying to sleep," wrote another.

Council members hoped residents would be reassured by the mitigation measures and the fact the work won't be happening on weekends, and welcomed Via's decision to invest in the Brockville facility.

"We as Brockvillians truly value the ability to be able to get on a train and go to Toronto, Montreal or wherever," said Mayor Mike Kalivas, recalling a time when discussions suggested Brockville could be "left out of the loop" with rail travel.

"We're very pleased, to see that Via Rail has Brockville now as part of the plan," said the mayor.

"It's an economic driver for us, as far as our ability to deal with industry, as well as for the commuters and the citizens that use the train service.

Soneira said that, after the major hubs of Ottawa, Dorval and Montreal, Brockville is the fourth station to get a platform upgrade.

Evan Modler, a project manager at Tomlinson, said the main noise mitigation measures will be ensuring deliveries of construction materials do not happen in the overnight hours, and making work is as productive as possible so there is less noise during down times.

The full council is expected to vote on the recommendation to waive the noise bylaw at its meeting on Tuesday.

North Stormont Landowners Feel They're Getting Railroaded

Finch Ontario - Several residents in North Stormont are among thousands in Canada with railway crossings on their private property who are currently, or could soon be, on the hook for repair and upgrade costs.

And some aren't too pleased about that.

One man, who lives in an area west of Finch, near Highway 43 and Goldfield Road, has the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) line running through his property, and doesn't feel he should be paying for the fixes, for upgrades required to adhere to Transport Canada's new regulations and standards.

The issue was also highlighted by the Chesterville Record with the newspaper reporting recently that Mountain resident Estella Rose, a former deputy mayor of North Dundas, was one of the residents receiving a letter from CP outlining her obligations to look after her railway crossing.

"They want \$1,000 to \$2,500 for liability insurance, but we already have farm insurance," Rose told the newspaper, adding the letter informed her the crossing would need new signage at a cost of \$700, and that a yearly assessment at the crossing will cost \$275.

"They should be paying us. It is an inconvenience for us, we would only go across to plant the seed, and maybe once to spray it, and then combine it.

"They (the railway) have always maintained it. That was the idea when they got the right-of-way. They used to put up fences to keep cattle in. If you called and told them your gate was not up to par, they would drop off a new gate. They always had a machine to cut the brush to be able to see down the track. Are they going to cut that too?"

The Standard-Freeholder contacted the CP media department with some questions regarding residents' concerns, and was told by Stacy Patenaude, the CP manager of government affairs and communications, that "existing federally regulated grade crossings must meet the requirements of the Grade Crossings Regulations by 28 Nov 2024."

Patenaude said Transport Canada has assigned responsibilities to private authorities and CP is trying to "contact and assist all private authorities, as much as possible, to understand the requirements of the regulations."

Patenaude added that residents with concerns can contact Transport Canada through its website.

Or, if they have disputes over costs for their crossing, they can contact the Canadian Transportation Agency at 1-877-850-7148, or through its website.

Incidents, injuries, and deaths are the main reasons for the required upgrades, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada reporting in one of its studies that between 2009 and 2015 there was annual national average of well over 170 incidents each year, with an average of nearly 25 fatalities and 25 serious injuries each year.

The Record reported it was early in 2020 when CP began contacting landowners with private crossings without agreements in place to sort out who was responsible for the crossing.

There are approximately 9,000 private grade crossings along more than 40,000 kilometres of federally regulated railway tracks in the country.

24/06/2022 *Ottawa City News**Chalk River**Renfrew*

Renfrew's CP Caboose gets a second lease on life

Renfrew's yellow CP Caboose avoided a last minute trip to the scrapyard after town council voted against scrapping it and vows to help maintain it.

The Renfrew CP Caboose, which is referred to by some residents as "the little train that could," did in fact live up to its nickname after Renfrew town council met on June 21 and with a vote of 5-2, the caboose is out of the scrapyard.

The future of the caboose was first raised in early 2021 when the town's recreation director, Kevin Hill, was directed by council to explore all options for the caboose which has remained closed for several years because of accessibility issues and extensive water damage inside the structure.

When he made his initial report to council, Hill provided various quotes to rehabilitate the caboose and one of the quotes was in excess of \$600,000. He also provided council with the option of removing the unit and either designate it as surplus or sell it directly to a scrapyard and recoup \$4,000.

Hill noted that his department was never directed over the last 15 years to maintain the site or address any structural concerns. With no direct maintenance on the caboose, it fell into a state of disrepair leading council to make a decision on its future.

Over the course of a year, the caboose was brought up at various meetings with council unable to make a decision on its future. This lack of action led Coun. Arlene Jamieson to request a notice of motion with the intent to make a decision once and for all.

In one of the very few meetings held inside the council chambers since COVID forced council to hold the majority of meetings virtually, Mayor Don Eady called the committee of the whole to order and read out the motion which called for the removal of the caboose and sold to a scrapyard or allow the unit to be sold to the highest amount offered.

After the motion was received, Mayor Eady invited councillors Jamieson and Sandi Heins to present their respective reports on the future of the caboose.

Jamieson proposes third party ownership

Jamieson stated she wanted the caboose to remain at the park, but proposed having a third party take ownership of the caboose. Her plan included the conversion of the unit into some type of tourist attraction which could include converting the caboose into an accommodation site that is booked out for tourists to spend an evening sleeping in the car.

Under this model, the town would still retain ownership of the park and the committee would be responsible for the maintenance of the site.

"I really think we can make this work by going back and looking at some of the offers to buy the train that Director Hill received when we first started this," she said. "If we can sell the caboose and the buyer can make something work there, then the town is not on the hook for costs and we don't have to worry about accessibility. It is a win-win for all parties."

Heins lobbies for community involvement

One of the conditions for the special meeting to proceed called for Heins to produce a certificate of insurance at the meeting. Councillors have been requesting the certificate in light of environmental concerns and liability.

Heins produced the certificate for council to examine and town clerk Kim Bulmer said it was satisfactory for the project to move forward if council chose to do so.

Heins previously served as mayor from 1998 until 2010 and was also a councillor when the caboose was placed in Haramis Park. As the spokesperson for the community group, she provided a five-part plan which detailed each individual phase of the restoration and approximate cost for each phase.

Experts Thrilled at Tunnel Visit

Brockville Ontario - A group of tunnel experts took a tour earlier this week of Brockville's own unique tunnel, and came away impressed.

Some 120 geological engineers, tunnelling experts and graduate students from across Canada visited the Brockville Railway Tunnel on Tuesday, getting a chance to cast an informed eye on its many features and formations, before sitting down to a banquet in the attraction in the evening.

"It was quite exciting," said Brian Porter, chairman of the Brockville Railway Tunnel Committee, adding the experts were impressed with what they saw.

Friday marked the fifth anniversary of the official opening of the Brockville Railway Tunnel.

Known as Canada's first railway tunnel, the restored feature has proven a lasting tourist attraction over the past half-decade.

Tuesday's visitors were in Kingston for a three-day conference organized by the Queen's Geomechanics and Geohazards Group, a research group in the university's Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering.

Dr. Mark Diederichs, a professor of geological sciences and geological engineering at Queen's who has brought students to the Brockville tunnel before, brought this group here.

Porter said the interest was palpable as the group's members made their way from the north end through the tunnel.

He added they were addressed by Prof. Diederichs, Profs. Jennifer Day, Jean Hutchinson from Queen's, and Erik Eberhardt, past president of the Tunnelling Association of Canada.

"They were people from all over Canada who work with rock formations, rock hazards, and that type of thing," added Porter.

"They had an appreciation for this early tunnelling project in Canada."

Brockberry Catering took care of the banquet inside the tunnel.

The group got a chance to appreciate historical features most tunnel-goers might miss, and their visit offers more exposure to Brockville's unique attraction, said Porter.

"We've got a treasure," he added.

"When they go back home, they're the kind of people who will talk about this experience. It's good for Brockville."