

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 2023

22/01/2023 CTV News

Winchester

No One Hurt After Train Collides With Van at Rail Crossing South of Ottawa

22 January 2023

North Grenville Ontario - There are no reports of injuries after a freight train collided with a vehicle south of Ottawa.

Emergency crews responded to the collision on County Road 18 near Dennison Road in North Grenville Sunday evening.

Ontario Provincial Police said the train was blocking two miles of track, and it would take approximately four hours to clear the scene.

"Thankfully, no one was injured," the OPP said.

Photos shared by the OPP on Twitter showed a badly damaged white van near the rail crossing.

02/02/2023 CBC News

Kingston (CN)

Gananoque

Man Killed in Vehicle-Train Collision

Gananoque Ontario - The OPP said officers were on scene Wednesday afternoon to investigate the fatal collision on the train tracks at Pykeview Drive in the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, about a five-minute drive north of Gananoque.

OPP Sgt. Erin Cranton said the driver was a 75-year-old man.

Cranton told CBC the collision happened shortly after 16:00, Wednesday, and that both CN Police and CN have been engaged.

VIA Rail confirmed in an email to CBC News that train 67 en route to Toronto had collided with the vehicle.

As of 23:00, Wednesday, train 67 was back on the move after a delay of more than six hours, according to VIA.

A total of 926 passengers across nine trains were impacted by the delays, VIA said.

VIA told CBC that train 67 passengers would receive a travel credit.

The Transportation Safety Board said in an email to CBC News that it is monitoring the situation but is not currently investigating.

Police urged people to avoid the area.

02/02/2023 CityNews

Kingston (CN)

Gananoque

Man dies in crash involving train in Leeds and Thousand Islands Township

A car was struck by a passenger train on the tracks near Pykeview Drive, killing the 75-year-old driver of the vehicle.

The 75-year-old driver, and lone occupant of the vehicle, was pronounced dead at the scene.

One man is dead after a collision involving a car and a passenger train in Leeds and the Thousand Islands Township.

The Leeds County Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) was called to the train tracks near Pykeview Drive just before 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

A car had been struck by a train on the tracks, which shut down all train traffic until 10 p.m.

The 75-year-old driver, and lone occupant of the vehicle, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Out of respect for the privacy of the victim's family, the name of the man, who is a local resident to the area, is not being released. A post-mortem is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 2.

CN Police and CN Rail have responded and the cause of the collision is under investigation.

03/02/2023 Ottawa Citizen

Kingston (CN)

Gananoque

Motorist, 75, killed after car hit by train

A 75-year-old man died Wednesday afternoon after his car was hit by a passenger train on the tracks at Pikeview Drive in Leeds and the Thousand Islands Township, Ontario Provincial Police said. Leeds County OPP officers responded to reports of the crash just before 4:00 p.m. Wednesday, police said in a media release Thursday. The driver, a local resident who was alone in the vehicle, was pronounced dead at the scene. A post-mortem examination is scheduled for Thursday. The man's name was not released. The cause of the collision is under investigation with CN rail and CN Police engaged, the OPP said. Train traffic was stopped until just after 10:00 p.m.. Wednesday.

09/02/2023 Radio-Canada

Maniwaki

La locomotive de l'ancien train à vapeur ne finira pas ses jours à la Ferme Dalton

Toujours entreposée dans un hangar à l'ancienne gare de train, la locomotive du train touristique Hull-Chelsea-Wakefield ne finira pas ses vieux jours au parc écologique de la Ferme Dalton.

La présidente de la Corporation d'aménagement de la rivière Blanche (CARB) de Gatineau, responsable de la Ferme Dalton, Nathalie Lepage, a annoncé qu'en raison de plusieurs défis, la ferme est obligée de décliner l'offre de la Ville de Gatineau.

"Ça a été une longue discussion au conseil d'administration, mais après réflexion, il y avait effectivement de nombreux défis qui nous ont amenés à refuser. Nous avons d'abord un défi d'expertise. Ça prend de l'expertise pour une locomotive de cette taille-là. Il y avait des enjeux de sécurité aussi," a commenté Mme Lepage.

Les autres défis qui ont refroidi la corporation, ce sont les coûts associés à l'entretien de la locomotive et le manque d'espace pour entreposer la locomotive, ajoute Mme Lepage.

"On essayait de trouver le meilleur endroit où ça aurait pu être installé et on ne voyait pas non plus d'endroit possible", a-t-elle continué.

En 2017, la Ville de Gatineau avait annoncé qu'elle comptait faire déménager l'engin, immobilisé à Hull depuis 2011, afin qu'il devienne l'un des attraits du parc écologique de la Ferme Dalton.

Un an plus tard, le conseil devait se prononcer sur le financement de ce transfert.

Un plan B?

Dans une déclaration écrite, la Ville de Gatineau a indiqué à Radio-Canada qu'elle avait "offert à la CARB d'installer, sur le site de la ferme du parc Dalton, la locomotive de l'ancien petit train à vapeur de Wakefield. Cette offre a toutefois été déclinée par le conseil d'administration de la CARB, qui en a informé la Ville au printemps 2022."

N'empêche que le conseiller du district de la Rivière-Blanche, Jean Lessard, s'est dit "déçu" de savoir que le projet n'aboutira finalement pas.

"On était tous emballés, mais quand on a vu certaines embûches, on s'est dit que le recul était mieux."

La Ville n'a toujours pas de plan pour l'avenir de cet engin. Elle dit cependant étudier d'autres options.

Le conseiller souhaite que la locomotive puisse demeurer à Gatineau. Il la voit même se garer au futur Musée régional de l'Outaouais.

Cette option est encore hypothétique aux yeux des responsables du musée qui ne cachent pas leur intérêt. Le président du Musée régional, Jean-Marc Blais, admet que cela "cadrait très bien" avec le projet en chantier.

Il convient toutefois que cela est une question d'espace disponible. "Une fois qu'on aura un site, on saura où le musée pourra s'installer, et ce sera plus facile pour nous de déterminer si on a les espaces pour collectionner un gros item comme celui-là."

En attendant, la locomotive de l'ancien train à vapeur va demeurer cachée dans son hangar.

The Day the Army Came to Town

Canada - The winter of 1941-1942 was a dark time for Canadians.

Europe was firmly in the hands of Nazi Germany and the Royal Air Force had only just managed to fight off the Luftwaffe and win the Battle of Britain. England was hungry and needed weapons, but the sea lanes back to North America were infested with German submarine wolf packs which tormented the merchant ships that were trying to keep the United Kingdom alive.

On 7 Dec 1941 the Japanese launched their infamous attack on Pearl Harbor, pulling a reluctant America into the war and opening the West Coast to a new threat.

Only a few weeks later the British garrison at Hong Kong, which had just been reinforced with almost 2,000 Canadians, fell to the Japanese Army, and the entire Allied force was either killed or captured.

By Christmas Day, 290 of the Canadian soldiers who had arrived in Hong Kong the previous month were dead and more than 1,600 others were sent off to prisoner of war camps, where 264 more would die before being liberated in 1945.

Train Allowed Public to See Soldiers and Weapons First Hand

Faced with bad news in Asia and a seemingly unstoppable German army in Europe, the political and military leaders in Ottawa needed to do something to rally the Canadian people to the cause of the war.

At the beginning of 1942 they settled upon a masterful public relations campaign to bolster support for the military.

A 15-car-long train, advertised as the Canadian Army Train, was assembled in Ottawa to carry more than \$3 million worth of "Made in Canada" military equipment on a 24,000 kilometre coast-to-coast tour of the country.

Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel J.E. McKenna, a veteran of the Great War, and a popular member of the Royal Montreal Regiment, the train's role was to provide the Canadian public with a chance to see the soldiers and weapons of their army first hand.

More practically, the train also served as a mobile recruitment centre, drawing young men and women from across the country into the ranks of the armed forces.

Of equal importance, it was also a running advertisement for the sale of the Victory Bonds needed to finance the war.

Coaches were painted red, blue, gray, and maroon to honour the colours of the four Canadian Divisions that had been formed.

The 65 soldiers who lived and worked aboard the train during its tour were hand picked to represent more than 40 different units from across the country.

The train usually visited two or three towns per day, setting up for three hours at a time to let people walk through the carriages and see a broad range of military equipment, most of which had never been shown in public before.

Exhibits included a Valentine Tank, a Bren Gun Carrier, a jeep, a 25 pound artillery piece, light and heavy machine guns, rifles, small arms, clothing, medical equipment, communications and signaling devices, and an 800,000,000 candlepower searchlight that was visible from up to 100 kilometres away.

The cars were organized into displays representing different parts of the army, including the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, the Royal Canadian Engineers, the Royal Canadian Artillery, and even the Dental and Medical Corps.

Also on board was a display from the Canadian Red Cross Society that focused upon its role in sending care packages to allied prisoners of war, and in and collecting blood serum to send over to Britain to help treat wounded soldiers and civilians.

Stops in Cornwall and Rigaud

The train started its tour in Ottawa on 3 Feb 1942 and over the next three months visited 202 different communities across the country, drawing in a remarkable 800,000 visitors at a time when the population of Canada was less than 12 million people.

Residents of Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec were first able to visit the train on the afternoon of 23 Feb 1942 when it stopped in Cornwall after having come along the St. Lawrence River from Brockville.

The next morning the train moved on to Rigaud where more than 2,000 people, led by the mayor, came out to welcome it.

Later that day it proceeded to Ste. Anne de Bellville, where almost 5,000 people walked through the exhibits, the highest turn out to date for the tour.

For its visit to Quebec the English posters that offered information on the military equipment aboard the train elsewhere in Canada were switched to bilingual signs.

On board, the 15 bilingual soldiers who normally attended to the exhibits were augmented with more French speaking soldiers, in order to better convey their message to local citizens.

Following a visit to Montreal and the Eastern Townships, the train continued into the Maritimes, before turning around and heading westwards across the country, all the way to Vancouver.

Then, circling to the east once again, the train made its way back across Canada stopping in towns all along the way before finally ending its tour in Montreal on 10 May 1942.

Hard days remained throughout the rest of 1942.

In June the Alaskan islands of Attu and Kiska were occupied by Japanese forces, bringing the war to the doorstep of North America.

Later, in August, the Canadian Army launched its ill-fated raid on Dieppe, where almost 1,000 men died in less than 12 hours on the beaches of France.

The war was not going well, but the Canadian people remained committed to the cause and by the end of the fighting more than a million Canadians and Newfoundlanders had served in the military.

Of these, 45,000 never made it home.

While the Canadian Army Train certainly didn't win the war, it did manage to win the support of the population at a time when victory was by no means certain.

Shawn MacWha.

Multiple freight train cars derailed at Smiths Falls yard

On the morning of Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023, Kingstonist received report of a freight train derailment in Smiths Falls.

According to a local resident, 15 or more train cars had derailed from the CP tracks between Lorne Street in Smiths Falls and Rosedale Road. They also noted that two transport trucks carrying rails and rail ties, as well as crews were at the scene shortly after noon.

Following multiple inquiries from Kingstonist, CP Rail issued a short statement regarding the incident.

"Last night a freight train derailed at slow speed in the Smiths Falls yard. The derailed rail cars remained upright. There were no leaks, spills or injuries," CP said. "The incident is under investigation."

Picture caption:

A tractor trailer brings rails and rail ties to the scene of a CP Rail derailment in Smiths Falls. Photo by Pete Harris

Train derailment in Smiths Falls yard Monday night

A CP freight train derailed at slow speed in the Smiths Falls yard Monday night.

Canadian Pacific confirms that the cars stayed upright after derailing. They confirmed that there were no leaks, spills, or injuries.

An investigation into how it happened is being carried out, and there's been no word on possible damages.

Historic Calumet railway station preservation effort continuing.

Grenville-sur-la-Rouge

Grenville-sur-la-Rouge continues to develop plans to preserve the historic railway station in Calumet.

According to Mayor Tom Arnold, architects and engineers are developing plans and protected costs to submit to the Quebec Gatineau railway, and discussions continue between the municipality and the railway.

In November 2021, council approved entering negotiations with the railway about the future of the building, which had fallen into extremely poor condition.

On January 31, 2023, Grenville-sur-la-Rouge council approved a transaction with the railway to pay for work already done during the past year in order to put a temporary cover over the station, as the existing roof was no longer reliable or stable. Arnold said that the total cost of that work was about \$9,000, but the railway was covering about \$5,000 of the expense.

The mayor is optimistic the municipality and the railway will eventually reach an agreement on preserving the station.

"I'm hopeful we'll get something going soon," he said.

Arnold noted there is not a lot of time left due to the poor condition of the building.

"We can't wait forever, obviously the building is degrading," he commented.

The Quebec Gatineau Railway is a division of Genesee and Wyoming. The 450-kilometre line from Gatineau to Quebec City, which crosses the southern part of Argenteuil was part of the Canadian Pacific Railway until 1997. The Quebec Gatineau Railway continues to own the Calumet station. Arnold said Grenville-sur-la-Rouge council wants the station to be saved and is doing what is within its means to ensure it is preserved.

Une nouvelle vie pour la gare du Bourget

Construite en 1893 et désaffectée dans les années 1970, la gare de Bourget est un lieu historique laissé à l'abandon depuis plus d'une décennie, mais la Corporation du sentier récréatif Prescott-Russell (CSRPR), la Ville et les propriétaires de Hammond Hill et de la Broken Stick Brewery cherchent à donner une nouvelle vie à ce bâtiment patrimonial local.

Lors de la réunion du conseil municipal du mercredi 8 mars, Aaron Markel, propriétaire d'Aim Project Management et de Hammond Hill eco resort, a proposé un projet de 1,5 million de dollars pour restaurer la station et créer un bâtiment multifonctionnel qui comprendrait un restaurant et un café, une micro-brasserie, un atelier de réparation de bicyclettes et offrirait des espaces communautaires et des programmes, tout en conservant le design d'origine intact.

« Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait quelque chose de plus intéressant que de redonner vie à quelque chose, a dit M. Markel. « Il n'y a pas de désignation patrimoniale, mais notre intention est de la reconstruire comme si elle l'avait été. L'ensemble de la façade doit donner l'impression d'être à bord d'un train d'il y a 100 ans. »

Markel, dont l'entreprise a participé à la restauration d'autres bâtiments patrimoniaux, se concentre sur la création de constructions respectueuses de l'environnement. Il a déclaré que le maintien de l'histoire et de la culture de la gare est d'une importance capitale tout en offrant un espace qui rassemble la communauté. Le fait de voir la gare dans son état actuel l'a attristé et l'a incité à agir.

« Il y a toutes ces nouvelles constructions et ces maisons plus anciennes, et puis il y a ce qui devrait être un point de repère planté au milieu. Et c'est en train de se décomposer. Littéralement en train de pourrir sous les yeux de tout le monde », a commenté M. Markel.

Il a également déclaré que l'accueil réservé par la communauté depuis que le projet a été proposé a été remarquable. Même s'il pensait qu'il s'agissait d'un projet important, il ne savait pas à quel point il serait bien accueilli par la communauté dans son ensemble.

« De nombreuses personnes m'ont contacté pour me dire que c'était génial et pour me remercier, a dit M. Markel. C'est une grande fierté pour nous. »

Les conseillers ont voté à l'unanimité en faveur du projet et l'ont soutenu avec enthousiasme, indiquant que le projet de restauration s'inscrivait parfaitement dans le plan stratégique et la stratégie de développement économique de la ville, qui visent à améliorer l'économie locale dans les zones rurales et à créer des espaces communautaires dynamiques. L'administration de la ville est maintenant chargée de négocier le contrat de vente.

« Je pense que cela attirera les gens dans le village et leur permettra de profiter de tout ce que nous avons à offrir, a dit Diane Choinière, conseillère municipale de Bourget. Cela montrera aux résidents que l'accent n'est pas mis uniquement sur Rockland. Cela montre que nous sommes prêts à établir des partenariats avec des entreprises et des organisations locales pour réaliser des projets comme celui-ci. »

Prochaines étapes

Un accord de vente comprendrait le transfert de la propriété du bâtiment à la CSRPR pour un prix symbolique (la famille Robillard a donné la station à la ville en 2013) et le transfert de 450 000 dollars de frais de développement, collectés auprès des constructeurs au fil des ans et mis de côté pour la gare.

La gare rénovée constituerait un autre arrêt attrayant le long du sentier CSRPR, qui attire chaque année des centaines de milliers de marcheurs, de cyclistes et de motoneigistes. Actuellement, le sentier de 72 kilomètres, qui s'étend de la frontière du Québec jusqu'à Orléans, a plusieurs destinations le long de son parcours, dont aucune ne se trouve actuellement dans Clarence-Rockland, à l'exception du Camping Paradis à Bourget, qui est listé comme hébergement potentiel à proximité du sentier.

Dans sa présentation au conseil, M. Markel a indiqué que la construction prendrait jusqu'à deux ans, mais il a précisé qu'il préférerait « moins promettre et plus livrer. »

Au fur et à mesure de l'avancement du projet, la Ville organisera des réunions publiques afin de tenir les habitants informés et recueillir leurs suggestions et commentaires sur la nouvelle vie de la gare.

Translation

A new life for Le Bourget station

Built in 1893 and decommissioned in the 1970s, Bourget Station has been an abandoned historic site for over a decade, but the Prescott-Russell Recreation Trail Corporation (PRSRC), the City and the owners of Hammond Hill and the Broken Stick Brewery are looking to breathe new life into this local heritage building.

At the Wednesday, March 8 City Council meeting, Aaron Markel, owner of Aim Project Management and Hammond Hill eco resort, proposed a \$1.5 million project to restore the resort and create a multi-purpose building that would include a restaurant and café, microbrewery, bicycle repair shop, and offer community spaces and programs, while keeping the original design intact.

"I don't think there's anything more interesting than bringing something back to life," Marcel said. There is no heritage designation, but our intention is to rebuild it as if it had been. The entire façade must give the impression of being on board a train from 100 years ago. »

Markel, whose company has been involved in the restoration of other heritage buildings, focuses on creating environmentally friendly constructions. He said maintaining the station's history and culture is of paramount importance while providing a space that brings the community together. Seeing the station in its current state saddened him and prompted him to take action.

"There are all these new builds and older houses, and then there's what should be a landmark planted in the middle. And it's breaking down. Literally rotting in front of everyone's eyes," Markel said.

He also said the community has received a remarkable response since the project was proposed. Even though he thought it was an important project, he didn't know how well it would be received by the community as a whole.

"A lot of people contacted me to say it was great and to thank me," Marcel said. This is a source of great pride for us. »

Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the project and enthusiastically supported it, stating that the restoration project fits perfectly with the city's strategic plan and economic development strategy, which aims to improve the local economy in rural areas and create vibrant community spaces. The city administration is now responsible for negotiating the sales contract.

"I think it will attract people to the village and allow them to enjoy all that we have to offer," said Diane Choinière, Bourget City Councillor. This will show residents that the focus is not just on Rockland. It shows that we are willing to partner with local businesses and organizations to deliver projects like this. »

Timeline

A sale agreement would include transferring ownership of the building to the CSRPR for a nominal price (the Robillard family donated the station to the city in 2013) and transferring \$450,000 in development costs, collected from builders over the years and set aside for the station.

The renovated station would be another attractive stop along the CSRPR Trail, which attracts hundreds of thousands of walkers, cyclists and snowmobilers each year. Currently, the 72-kilometre trail, which stretches from the Quebec border to Orleans, has several destinations along its route, none of which are currently in Clarence-Rockland, with the exception of Camping Paradis in Bourget, which is listed as potential accommodation near the trail.

In his presentation to council, Markel said construction would take up to two years, but said he prefers "less promise and more deliver."

As the project progresses, the City will hold public meetings to keep residents informed and gather their suggestions and comments on the station's new life.

Via Rail train en route to Ottawa delayed by more than 2 hours due to mechanical trouble

A Via Rail train en route to Ottawa was delayed by a mechanical issue Monday afternoon, but another train arrived to get passengers to their destination. Travellers on Via Rail train #42 from Toronto to Ottawa were stranded outside Smiths Falls, Ont. for about two hours. According to Via Rail's online schedule, the train should have arrived in Ottawa just before 5 p.m. The train had arrived in Smiths Falls at 4:13 p.m. but Via Rail says it became stuck a short time later.

In a statement to CTV News, Via Rail said train #44, the next scheduled trip, would take the stuck passengers the rest of the way.

"We can confirm that VIA Rail train 42 is currently stopped at Dwyer Hill with mechanical issues," the statement sent at 6:15 p.m. said. "Via Rail train 44 is en route and will be connecting with train 42 to transport passengers to their final destination in Ottawa."

The trip from Smiths Falls to Fallowfield Station in Ottawa is normally around 30 minutes, but passengers on train #42 didn't arrive at that stop until just before 7 p.m.

Train #44 was scheduled to arrive at the Tremblay Road station in Ottawa at 6:43 p.m. but was delayed by about 35 minutes and arrived at around 7:20 p.m.

Via Rail apologizes, investigating after Muslim man told no praying at Ottawa station

Via Rail says it apologizes unreservedly to the man and to the entire Muslim community.

Via Rail has apologized and says it's investigating after a video of an employee telling a Muslim man not to pray at its Ottawa station circulated online.

The video on TikTok appears to show a Via Rail employee telling a man that he cannot pray at the station and he should go outside if he wants to pray.

Via Rail says it apologizes unreservedly to the man and to the entire Muslim community. It says it is taking what happened "very seriously" and an investigation is ongoing.