



Boundary Trail Railway Company

Shortline Railway Sees Continued Growth

*Submitted by Travis Long,
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With harvest now underway, and school starting up again, this is a good time to remind everyone that “anytime is train time”. Our local shortline railway, The Boundary Trail Railway Company (BTR), will be operating larger trains, more frequently, which means that motorists and school bus drivers must use caution when approaching local railroad crossings. A reminder as well that train tracks are NOT a safe place to walk or ride ATVs – there have been several incidents of trespassing recently, and in addition to the safety hazards, trespassing on railway property is a serious offence.

BTR was formed in 2008, when Canadian Pacific decided to abandon the railway tracks between Morden and Killarney. Local producers and business owners formed the BTR, and successfully purchased 23 miles of track,

from Morden to Binney. Since 2009, it has handled over 3600 producer carloads of grain (mostly wheat, oats and rye), which amounts to about 473,000 metric tons, or 13.3 million bushels of grain. These shipments have gone to destinations all over Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

The company’s infrastructure includes 26 road crossings and two bridges. BTR now owns two GP9 locomotives, each rated at 1750HP, and has leased additional power when required for special projects.

In addition to owning, maintaining, and operating the track infrastructure and locomotives, BTR also now operates trains over CP property from Morden to Rosenfeld, providing rail service to CP’s smaller customers in Morden, Winkler and Plum Coulee, including Scoular Grain, Prinsco Canada, Buf-

falo Creek Mills and Global Grain. BTR has successfully completed 16 months of expanded operations over CP without incident, solidifying its relationship with CP as a reliable interchange partner, and paving the way for future collaboration on expanding rail options in south central Manitoba.

BTR recently provided intensive switching service to Phase 1 of Enbridge’s Line 3 Segment Replacement Project. For this, BTR operated trains between Rosenfeld and Plum Coulee 5 days per week for 5 consecutive weeks, as flat cars of pipe were spotted and unloaded by contractors. Phase 2 of the project is expected to happen in Manitou in 2017.

The formation of BTR has generated wider economic impacts in the local area. By the end of the third season of operations for the rail line, local producers had invested over \$1.6M in additional

trackside infrastructure to facilitate grain storage and carloading activities, and expansion/upgrade projects are ongoing at these sites. Producers making use of the local rail line have realized significant financial returns through competitive grain bids and a wider variety of sales options, and reduced on-farm transportation expense compared to delivering to primary elevators that are a further distance away. More directly, BTR has contributed to the local economy with expenditures for property taxes, payroll, fuel, materials and contractors totalling over \$2.1M since 2009.

For more information on grain marketing options, or local rail services, check out www.BTRC.ca, or contact the BTR office at 204-242-2051, BTRC@mymts.net, or stop in at #3-346 Fuller Avenue (rear entrance of the Access Credit Union building).