



For immediate release

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Lifelong love of railroads has North Van resident on track to Train Expo

(Vancouver, BC) This year's Nov. 5 and 6 Vancouver Train Expo has something for all North Shore families, including an opportunity for children and youth to experience hands-on the grand past-time of another millennium, and for older enthusiasts to gain exposure to the state-of-the-art technology of today's new trains.

North Vancouver's Alan Lill is no stranger to trains big and small and will be playing a key role in the Expo. As chair of the Canadian National Railways Historical Association, he will be managing a booth and presenting to attendees detailed operating models of Canadian National (CN) trains as well as information about the Association's publications. The CN Lynn Creek yard in North Vancouver is on the cover of a recent issue of one of the publications.

Lill's interest in trains was inspired at an early age as his family regularly rode the CN campers' specials from Winnipeg to his family cottage in Ontario. Many of the lake resorts east of Winnipeg were only accessible by train until late in the 20th century. The cottage was in close proximity to railroad tracks and he grew up fascinated by trains, especially in the transition from steam power to diesels in the 1950s. He began to model trains as a teenager with a major focus on CN. After moving to North Vancouver in 1959, he broadened his involvement to include other local railways, and joined a North Shore model railway group in 1965.

He encourages North Shore families to make the short hop across the Second Narrows Bridge to attend the Train Expo at the PNE Forum and gain exposure to an exciting hobby.

"I think the Train Expo is an important venue to give everyone – including North Shore residents – a chance to see a wide variety of model railways first-hand and kindle interest in the hobby amongst young people. Trains are indisputably a special part of the North Shore landscape," said Lill.

The Train Expo is important because it effectively represents – on a much smaller scale – the contribution railways made, and continue to make, to Canadian history and culture. The first Canadian transcontinental was completed in 1885, simplifying long-distance overland travel. From then until the 1950's, trains were the transportation workhorses of society.

After commercial airlines took off, trains and planes fought for passenger business with airlines replacing trains as the glamorous way to travel. Evidence of the esteem rail travel had in earlier times exists in the opulence of restored railway stations (Grand Central Station in New York, Pacific Central Station in Vancouver).

Model railroading is a complex, rewarding hobby that ranges from pushing wooden trains around on the floor to replicating a part of Canada's history in miniature, sometimes re-enacting a particular time and date in history, and adhering to the same rule book and procedures as the real railroad did in that day.

The Train Expo will feature trains made from scratch by hobbyists with metal working skills, and others produced by 3D printers. The show will appeal to kids who are fascinated with miniature working mechanisms, and older folk who enjoy learning or developing the various technical and artistic skills that are part of this creative endeavour.

In addition to a variety of interactive train displays such as Thomas & Friends, the Train Expo will offer mini-rail train rides, LEGO® displays and balloon twisters – the perfect family outing for a pre-Christmas weekend.

The Train Expo takes place at the PNE Forum on Saturday, Nov. 5 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 6 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.vancouvertrainexpo.ca.

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