

# *The Megaphone*

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**meg·a·phone** [meg-uh-fohn] –noun  
1. a cone-shaped device for magnifying or directing the voice, chiefly used in addressing a large audience out of doors or in calling to someone at a distance.  
www.dictionary.com

Hello everyone!

I know you are all planning some great local events over the summer months and we want you to be sure to send information in to us about them!

We'll put your events on the website and after the summer, we hope to feature some of them in *Megaphone* too. Please send your information to [mas@saskmuseums.org](mailto:mas@saskmuseums.org) so we don't miss any information during the summer holiday season!

Today, I want to tell you about a great event with many partners that will be taking place over July and early August in southwest Saskatchewan.

One of the most historic horse trails in Saskatchewan runs from modern-day Wood Mountain to Fort Walsh National Historic Site. The trail was first used by First Nations and Métis peoples, and from 1875 until 1912, the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) used it for a horse patrol.

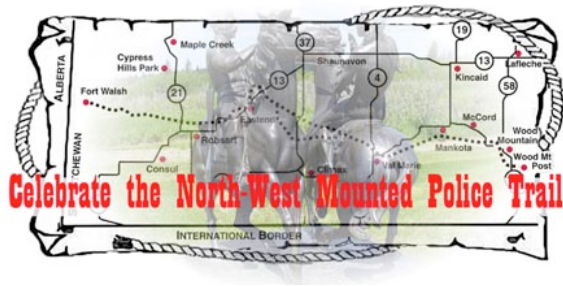
This year, the Rural History and Culture Association of Saskatchewan is joining with the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society and six heritage and cultural organizations in communities on or near it to **Celebrate the NWMP Trail**. The celebration consists of six festivals being held: July 1 in Wood Mountain; July 4, in McCord; July 11 in Eastend; July 18-19 in Shaunavon; July 24 in Val Marie; and August 2 at Fort Walsh National Historic Site.

Mike Fedyk, President of the Rural History and Culture Association, says this project was the next stage building from a festival the association staged last year in Mossbank, commemorating the first meeting between the NWMP and First Nations people.

“After that event, we looked for other ideas that would allow us to develop the NWMP/First Nations theme, and Everett Baker's work in marking the NWMP Trail seemed like a great way to involve a whole series of communities and take the theme to a whole other level,” Fedyk told me in an e-mail interview. Baker, the first President of the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society, led the effort to mark the trail in the 1950s and 60s.

Work on the event started in January, and is part of the association's ongoing mandate to create participatory events that celebrate Saskatchewan's history, Fedyk said.

“These events are about community engagement and participant involvement in history,” he says. “The festivals include participatory activities like storytelling campfires and trail rides that allow people to go beyond just being spectators. They can experience history!”



The event's website is <http://www.rhcask.ca/nwmp-trail/>  
It outlines all of the events at each of the locations – they sound great!

Each festival begins with a trail ride into town from the original NWMP Trail. The ride will be led by actors portraying James Walsh of the NWMP, First Nations Chief Sitting Bull and Métis Guide Louis Leveille.

They also include presentations from and performances by:

- Renowned Saskatchewan playwright, author, actor and storyteller Ken Mitchell, and his epic, *The Medicine Line*;
- Garrett Wilson, the award-winning Saskatchewan historian and writer of the critically acclaimed *Frontier Farewell: The 1870s and the End of the Old West*;
- The words and pictures of Everett Baker, the man who first recognized the historic importance of the NWMP Trail with historic markers;
- First Nations storytellers who, drawing on oral histories, capture the spirit of the land and its sacred connection to First People. Through drumming and dance, First Nations cultural performers keep alive ancient and sacred traditions; and
- Many different Saskatchewan singers and songwriters.

The principal funder of the celebration is the *Building Pride* grant program of the provincial Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, Fedyk says, and they are also receiving major support from the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. There are also community partners and the Fort Walsh National Historic Site, as well as provincial partners.

Local partners are: Wood Mountain Historic Society; McCord and District Museum; Prairie Wind and Silver Sage (Friends of Grasslands National Park) (Val Marie); The Grand Coteau Heritage and Cultural Centre (Shaunavon); Eastend Historical Museum; and Fort Walsh National Historic Site.

Provincial partners are the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society, Burning Sun Productions and Benchmark Public Relations.

Each community is setting its own fees, and some are not charging anything at all. All funds raised through entrance fees will remain with the local partner.

“These festivals provide a unique and exciting way to experience the history of the NWMP Trail. Come out and ride the trail with us!” Fedyk says.

I think I just might have to make a road (or trail!) trip myself this summer!

Talk to you next week! – Lisa