

Led by GMD FP9 1401, CP train 288-13, The Superior Flyer exits Jackfish Tunnel and starts into the horseshoe curve at MP 102 of the Heron Bay subdivision. This is the train's first morning run to Coldwell, Ontario, on July 14, 2010.



THE SUPERIOR FLYER:

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS ALONG THE NORTH SHORE

Article and photos by David Young

It was a cool, wet July night in Thunder Bay. I sat overlooking Canadian Pacific's Westfort yard and checked my watch. The arms showed 23:30. With my scanner on in the background, I continued to sit, listening for something that doesn't pass through the Lakehead too often. For months a few of us local railfans had wondered what CP would bring to the North Shore as part of the 125th Anniversaries of the driving of the Last Spike in the east and the Township of Schreiber. Listening carefully to the scanner, the question was answered: "CP Fourteen Naught-One, clear to stop to Westfort on the south track" crackled over the sound waves and my anticipation grew. After recently being reactivated, CP F-units, FP9 1401 and FB9 1900, now fully operational and traveling half way across Canada on a "Last Spike Community Tour," were about to stop at our doorstep. Accompanying the F-units would be CP GP38-2 3084, painted in maroon and grey with Canadian Pacific script lettering. Thoughts flew through my mind as I anticipated the events to come. I would soon be watching the train run past my home and then following it on its voyage along the North Shore with a couple of other railfan friends. Before that, however, I would be one of the fortunate few to ride aboard the train on a short fan-trip thanks to a winning ticket from a raffle held by CP.

In the distance, the clanging of Fourteen-Naught One's bell could be heard throughout the old Westfort Village; the hum of GMD products slowing down, then a crackle over the scanner: "CP Fourteen Naught-One, Restricting Signal at Westfort on the south track, entering Thunder Bay Cautionary Limit, out!" The moment had come – the CP Heritage Train had arrived! Moments later the sleek rounded nose of the locomotive appeared, its large headlight glowing while its body glistened under the yard lights. It came to a stop within view between the buildings as the conductor climbed down the side of the cab to line a switch. Twelve miles earlier, while the train passed through the small town of Murillo, the crew received yarding instructions from CHB29 to pull into track A3 at Westfort and leave it tied down at the east end for the night. After lining for the route, the conductor jumped back into the shelter of the small cab and the engineer throttled up the locomotives. The melodic sounds of 567s revving up were music to the ears. Streams of diesel exhaust shot into the damp night sky as the train began to move. The locomotives passed behind a building and all that could be seen were the coaches as they click-clacked over the 100-pound jointed rail that makes up the Westfort yard. The train appeared through one last opening before I watched the vintage passenger consist disappear into the night.