

Grain Elevator Inventory Project Enters Second Phase

The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation is updating its inventory of grain elevators and wants those that were bought or moved to farms to be on the list. The first inventory was done in 1999-2000 when about 900 elevators were listed.

The foundation has a file for each facility containing information obtained mainly from elevator companies, including the date the elevator was built, who built it, subsequent ownership and current condition. From that list a short list of 50-60 elevators was created to identify those the foundation thought were important or worthy of designation as a municipal or provincial heritage property.

Bill Brennan, the foundation's chair, expects the status of many of the 900 elevators to have changed in the short time since the first inventory was done.

"One of the biggest challenges in the second phase is tracking the elevators that were decommissioned and moved off site," says Brennan. He said an inventory will help groups and communities that want to restore and improve local elevators. Hundreds of elevators have already been demolished and many of those still standing face a grim future as rural Saskatchewan's population declines and rail lines are abandoned.

The "great find" of the first inventory was the Lake of the Woods Milling Company elevator, built in 1895 in Fleming, Saskatchewan. It is the oldest wooden elevator still standing and has received municipal designation as a heritage property. About seven Saskatchewan elevators have already been designated and Dr. Brennan hopes some will receive provincial designation as well.

Designation is based on age and unique features. Individual companies had their own styles and some, like the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Co., had their own construction departments. The foundation is conducting a preliminary inventory of the large concrete terminals built since the mid-1970s, beginning with Weyburn Inland Terminal. "The day will come when we will regard the concrete terminal as an important part of the Saskatchewan landscape," Dr. Brennan said. "Can one look ahead 100 years and imagine Weyburn Inland Terminal being designated as the first of its kind?"

Project researcher Raymond Ambrosi said that while he hasn't yet determined exactly how many terminals are in the province, preliminary statistics show about 87.

"The stats on terminals owned by the Wheat Pool, Parish and Heimbecker, Patterson, Louis Dreyfus, Bunge and independent producers are 100 per cent accurate," noted Mr. Ambrosi. "Some discrepancies exist when trying to determine the Cargill, Pioneer and Agricore facilities."

Individuals with information on grain elevators can contact researcher Ray Ambrosi at 306-522-9793 or saskelevators@cyr.gov.sk.ca.

The Western Producer, *Saskatchewan, Sask.*, 12/08/05. Saskatchewan ministry of culture youth and recreation http://www.cyr.gov.sk.ca/shf_initiatives.html