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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER of the PHILIP J. CURRIE DINOSAUR MUSEUM

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SINCE 2011

Preview: Amber Weekend a success!

Full Amber Weekend feature Newsosaur coming in September

By Erika Sherk

Who knew one week-end could contain so much festivity? August 7th to 9th, the County of Grande Prairie hosted celebrities, palaeontologists, politicians, stakeholders and thousands of members of public for a series of celebrations, culminating in the annual fundraising gala for the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum – the Amber Ball.

First was the Keys to the Region ceremony. Municipal leaders from around the Peace Country held the ceremony for Dan Aykroyd, Donna Dixon Aykroyd and their daughters at Grande Prairie City Hall on August 7, 2014 to honour their contributions to the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum project.

On Friday the project hosted palaeontologists from around the globe as well as special guests and stakeholders on two of the area's bonebeds to learn about dinosaurs and excavate fossils. Friday afternoon Hansen Ford and Speedpro Signs presented Leanne Beaupre, Reeve of the County of Grande Prairie with the Dino Bus – a 24-passenger bus for the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum. Hansen Ford donated the bus and Speedpro donated the distinctive dino-themed wrap.

Saturday was the big day.



Top: Cutting the ribbon at the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum building. Photo: Prairie Ranger Photography. Bottom left: motorcyclists arrive at the museum site after the MPHD Aykroyd Family Ride. Photo: Silver Creek Photography. Bottom right: Keys to the Region ceremony. Photo: Popik Photography.

The roar of motorcycle motors could be heard around the city as riders came from all directions to join the Mighty Peace Harley-Davidson Aykroyd Family Ride. Over 650 people participated and it was an incredible scene as hundreds of motorcyclists headed down Highway 43 towards the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum. MPHD sponsored the ride and also donated the 'Dino Bike,' a 2014 Harley-Davidson Softail Breakout customized with di-

nosaur art, to the museum project as a raffle item. Once the Ride had arrived, it was time for the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony at the museum site. It was open to everyone and included a free barbecue and a peek at the museum building. Over 3,700 people attended, according to RCMP estimates. It was a great occasion to bring together people from all over the region (and further afield!) to celebrate the museum building. We also cut the

ribbon on the Aykroyd Family Theatre.

The weekend wrapped with the Amber Ball – the pinnacle fundraising gala event. With 1,000 guests, The Tensors performing, Dan Aykroyd rocking the stage with a blues set, a five-course ultra-gourmet meal, and presentations from Dr. Philip J. Currie and the Aykroyd family, it was a huge success, raising about \$385,000. Thank you to all who helped make it so!



Executive Director's Note

Greetings from all of us at the Dino project.

We are in the final stages of preparations for the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on August 9th and it looks as if it will be an awesome celebration.

The palaeontologists are on site, the hotel rooms and bonebeds are prepared for our special guests who will be arriving the first week of August, the Keys to the Region are ready for presentation to the Aykroyd family on the steps to Grande Prairie City Hall at 4:30 pm on Thursday, August 7th, hundreds of local riders have signed up for the Mighty Peace Harley-Davidson Aykroyd Family Bike Ride at noon on Saturday August 9th, and the Amber Ball later that evening is sold out.

This should be the party of the decade for Grande Prairie and we are all anticipating great performances by Dan Aykroyd and the Tenors.

For those of you who have been waiting to see the inside of the museum please join us on Saturday, August 9th for the ribbon cutting at 1:15 pm and you can get a glimpse.

Thank you for all your support and have a great dino day.

Brian Brake
Executive Director
Pipestone Creek Dinosaur

The monster gets its scales!

By Karla Horcica,
PCL Construction



photos by PCL Construction

Done with the skeleton, onto the scales! A roof fit for a monster of a museum.

OIn the last few months the "skeleton" of the building was completed and now we are giving the building its scales...or in construction terms, the roof!

The roofing process started with thousands of metal clips being fastened to the metal deck and wood panels.

Insulation was then fit around all the clips and into every nook and cranny.

It is extremely important to have full coverage of the insulation so there are not any spots where the cold air can get through into the building. The final step in the roofing process is the metal panels.

What became the metal panels, showed up on site as a big coil of flat aluminum. A machine was sent to site, known as the roll former, that forms the aluminum coil into the sheets of metal panel.

The crews first measured every inch of the roof and walls that is to be covered in the metal panels, and the measurements were inputted into the roll former machine in order to cut the sheets to the correct lengths.

All the panels are 16" wide and vary in length to up to 80' long.

The roll former uses rollers, first large ones to form

the sides of the panel and then smaller ones to form the ribs.

There are almost 1,000 panels in total that will be installed and the roll former, which was shipped to site from the US, took only three days to form all the panels. As it is a multi-million dollar machine it was then quickly shipped off site to another job.

The finish of the aluminum is a mill finish so the shiny natural metal appearance that you see now is the finished product.

The building will be hard to miss when driving down the highway on a sunny day!

Palaeontologists converge in the Peace

Over a dozen palaeontologists at work excavating fossils in the area



photos by Laura Beauchamp

Main photo: Left to right, PCDI summer student Kate Targett and palaeontology research assistant Robin Sissons were part of the group out prospecting for fossils on the Wapiti River in late July. **Upper right:** Left, Dr. Federico Fanti and Dr. Matthew Vavrek examine an outcrop for fossils. **Bottom right:** a beautiful hadrosaur metatarsal piece found on the trip.

Watch out, Peace Country, the NADP is upon you. No need for concern, this is a good thing! There is a team of palaeontologists carrying out the Northern Alberta Dinosaur Project in the area – the start of what will be a long-term field research programme here. The palaeos hail from around the world, including Sweden and Italy, and are determined to uncover the secrets of the dinosaurs and other animals that lived in this area between 72 and 66 million years ago. Their aim is to explore the multitude of rocks that show up along the banks of rivers and creeks in the area, like the

Wapiti River, in search of all types of fossils. “This is the first year of the project and I am happy to say the future looks bright,” said Dr. Nicolas Campione, post doctorate researcher at Uppsala University in Uppsala, Sweden.

“The team has already discovered and collected from multiple sites that, based on initial assessments, will expand what we know about the dinosaurs that lived in this region, and how they are related, either ecologically or evolutionarily, with those from the rest of Alberta and North America.”

There are dinosaur fossils all over the world but

palaeontologists know few places are as good as Alberta when it comes to finding dinosaur fossils, especially those from the time period just before they went extinct (approximately 100-66 million years ago.)

To illustrate, the fossils found in the Dinosaur Park Formation in Southern Alberta has produced about 25% of known dinosaur species during that time period in all of North America.

By comparison, much less is known about the dinosaur from North America. That’s why Dr. Campione and a group of international palaeontolo-

gists (including Grande Prairie’s own Dr. Matthew Vavrek of the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum) have started the NADP.

There is also a team of palaeontologists from the U of A, led by Dr. Philip Currie, at work excavating the Pipestone Creek bonebed.

If you are interested in the project and would like to know more, please follow the team on Twitter, @PaleoNic, @MatthewVavrek, and @CurrieMuseum, and use the hashtag #NADP2014 in order to find updates and photographs from the field.

DINOSAUR OF THE MONTH

Kulindadromeus

Kulindadromeus is a new small dinosaur described in July, discovered in the Zabaikal region of Russia. It is a basal neornithischian, which means that it is a small ancestor of what evolved into the more commonly known duck-billed and horned dinosaurs. What is so special about the discovery of this animal is that its fossils are preserved with impressions of soft tissue structures around the body. Parts of *Kulindadromeus* were covered in large scales (feet and tail), and parts were fuzzy (body and head). This is strong evidence suggesting that many dinosaurs we did not previously suspect likely sported some feathery structures.



graphic by Danielle Dufault



Why are there so many palaeontologists here right now ?

Summer is a busy time for palaeontology in Grande Prairie, and we have visiting scientists from Italy, Sweden and Australia, as well as a team from the University of Alberta working in the region. Palaeontologists from all over come to northern Alberta to hunt for fossils for several reasons. One of the main reasons is that very little research has been completed from this area, and so chances are very good that any fossils that are found will be significant and new. The area around Grande Prairie preserves a complete terrestrial rock record through the late Cretaceous where it is interrupted by marine sequences elsewhere in the province. So this area provides a window into the land-living ecosystem that is not accessible in places like Dinosaur Provincial Park. Because of both the geographical location, rock type, and the position in geological time, we are hoping to fill in some gaps in the fossil record to better understand the ancient ecosystem of the dinosaurs.



photo by Laura Beauchamp

Ask a Paleo! by Robin Sissons.
Have a question for a palaeo?
Visit curriemuseum.ca

Thank you to our funding partners, donors and sponsors!



Ken and Teresa Sargent
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