

## Two more Rocky Mountaineer passenger cars are being upgraded at the Rail GD shop

Gilles Gagné

NEW RICHMOND: - On October 26 Rail GD, the New Richmond railway car and locomotive repair shop, received two more Rocky Mountaineer passenger cars for a major refurbishment job that will provide the Gaspesian company with work for five months.

Rocky Mountaineer and Rail GD have been conducting business together since the fall of 2013, when rail consultant Canarail, mandated by the tourist train operator to find a top-notch shop to carry out major work on some of its passenger cars, opted for the New Richmond company.

One car was refurbished between October 2013 and March 2014, and two more during the same period last year. The upgrading operation is a major one, as the double-decker cars' interior is completely stripped. All the seats, carpets, wiring and pipes are changed, among other things, and new state-of-the-art electrical and electronic devices are installed.

The initial agreement be-



Photo: G. Gagné

*Rocky Mountaineer also had two cars in the New Richmond shop between October 2014 and March 2015.*

tween Rocky Mountaineer, Canarail and Rail GD was for the refurbishment of four cars this year. All the parties settled for two. "It is a good agreement just the same. Upgrading two cars per year is quite satisfactory for Rail GD," says company president Gilles Babin.

The multi-year agreement is valued at several million dollars but all the parties are very discrete about the numbers and have chosen not to reveal them. Rail GD provides work to 35 people, sometimes more.

Rocky Mountaineer was founded in 1990 by the Arm-

strong Group, a British Columbia based, family owned company. Over the last quarter of a century, it has become the largest privately owned luxury tourist train company in the world. The company recently received its two-millionth passenger.

Rail GD was founded in

2011 and built a brand new shop in New Richmond at the beginning of 2012 in order to carry out a major contract for Rio Tinto, a large business operating an iron ore mine in Havre-Saint-Pierre. Rail GD was at the time contracted to rebuild the interior of the passenger train used by Rio Tinto to commute its employees between the town and the mine.

That mandate was after a small contract attained for VIA Rail between November 2010 and the spring of 2011. The company was still called Gaspésie Diesel then. That contract also consisted of repairing a passenger car. Since 2012, Rail GD has carried out repairs on locomotives and cars for many customers, including the Gaspésie Railway Society, Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Railway, as well as Tshiuetin Rail Transportation, the railway operated by the Natives between Sept-Îles and Schéfferville.