

Rail GD delivers cars no. 4 and 5 to Rocky Mountaineer

Gilles Gagné

general of Rail GD.

NEW RICHMOND: – At the end of March Rail GD completed two more cars belonging to Rocky Mountaineer, one of the top tourist train operators in the world. The interior of the two double-decker cars was completely rebuilt by the New Richmond railcar repair shop.

The cars arrived on November 2. The interior was then completely stripped before new equipment, such as seats, electrical and electronic wiring, sound system, lighting, floors, carpets and so on, was installed.

“In fact, we delivered the cars on February 28 and March 11 to Canarail, the consultant that provided us with the Rocky Mountaineer contract. Canarail then ran some tests. Overall, we worked 18 weeks on these cars,” says Joey Cyr, director

of Rail GD. The cars left New Richmond on March 30 for Kamloops, British Columbia, where Rocky Mountaineer owns a shop. They will have the last adjustments done there before resuming service a little later in April. The company operates tourist trains in Alberta, British Columbia and the state of Washington. Over the last two decades, more than 2 million passengers have ridden one of the Rocky Mountaineer trains.

Since November 2013, Rail GD has rebuilt the interior of five Rocky Mountaineer double-deckers, one in 2013-2014, two in 2014-2015 and two in 2015-2016.

The contract linking Canarail and Rail GD calls for the refurbishment of 11 additional cars.

Joey Cyr sees real progression in the way his crew



Photo: G. Gagné

The train left New Richmond at noon on March 30 and passed between Carleton and Saint-Omer (photo) 90 minutes later.

is working on the Rocky Mountaineer cars. The Rail GD work force reached 50 people during the peak period of the Canarail-Rocky Mountaineer contract.

The first year everything was new and about learning. The second year ran much more smoothly. This year it's like a production line. “We have changed the setup of the shop. We started with 24 workers assigned to dismantle and strip the interior, sometimes on two shifts. In 2014, we started with 14 guys, often working overtime. We were able to cut on the overtime this year. It was more efficient. Besides, it is

physical work. After eight hours of this type of work, you can add an hour of overtime but more than that, you only increase the risk of injuries and you lose efficiency,” explains Joey Cyr.

Not a single day of work was lost due to injuries, and Mr. Cyr is very proud of that. “A few workers had to put a bandage on a finger. That's about it,” he says.

Other modifications were made this year to the way work is organized in the shop.

“We changed the hierarchical structure of work inside the shop. Instead of relying essentially on a foreman, we named six team su-

pervisors. It provided the foreman with more time to plan instead of being constantly talking with employees. The teams developed great autonomy. We also had some small parts on the floor instead of workers having to go to our inventory room each time. We saved three minutes here, five minutes there and it showed in the end,” says Mr. Cyr.

Rail GD is currently trying to increase work during the summer at the shop. “We are bidding on a number of calls for tenders. We are confident that we will land something but I can't talk about it for now,” he states.