

# Speaking Notes

*Winnipeg, September 16, 2011*

**MARC LALIBERTÉ, PRESIDENT AND CEO, VIA RAIL CANADA  
DELIVERED AT WINNIPEG – UNION STATION 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

## **The Future – VIA Rail and Western Canada**

Minister Fletcher mentioned the Government of Canada's continued support for revitalizing passenger rail services throughout the West and across the country.

That support – the capital investment and the Economic Action Plan funding – is helping VIA Rail to deliver better, more efficient services to Canadians. We are building better track, better locomotives and passenger cars, and better stations right across the country.

And thanks to that Government support and investment, we are getting the tools we need to develop new products and services as we look to the future.

What does that mean for passenger rail here in Winnipeg, and Western Canada?

It means that we are bringing historic stations like this one, and our station in Vancouver, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It means more reliable service. One of our investment priorities was to rebuild our fleet of aging locomotives, extending their life for another 15 to 20 years, upgrading mechanical systems and improving their environmental performance. We are already using some of these rebuilt locomotives for service between Winnipeg and Churchill. They are delivering excellent performance.

In fact, they are exceeding our expectations for better fuel efficiency – which means lower greenhouse gas emissions.

We are also using these locomotives for our Western transcontinental service – the legendary *Canadian*, which has become synonymous with Western Canada in international travel markets. This year that service has become one of our best performing trains – attracting more riders from across Canada and around the world.

And it is going to attract more interest and more tourist business for Western Canada in the future. We are refurbishing 70 of the sleeping and dining cars in our stainless steel fleet, the equipment we use on the *Canadian*. This work is bringing our equipment up to par with the rising expectations of the international traveler – and it is already sparking new interest from some of Canada's biggest tour operators.

And we are developing an entirely new product for Western Canada – completely redesigning a special set of our famous Park cars and sleeping cars. We are turning them into some of the finest equipment you will find anywhere in the world, to deliver a true luxury travel experience.

The new class of service will appeal to the most discerning international rail traveler. And rail service in Western Canada will take a new step forward by breaking into a new, lucrative world market.

That's good business for VIA, and good business for tourism here in Winnipeg, in Manitoba, and across the West. The fact is, for every dollar people spend on board our trains, they spend many more in the communities our trains serve – supporting and growing local businesses.

This new equipment will be in service on the *Canadian* next year, and you will have an opportunity to see it first hand here at Winnipeg Union Station.

As we begin celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this station today, we are thinking about the future as much as the past – about the role that this station will play in Winnipeg, and Western Canada, over the next 100 years.

We are thinking about ways that we can improve the services we provide and about how we can work with people, communities and business partners throughout Western Canada to make those services better.

This station and passenger rail are part of Western Canada's heritage. As we look forward to Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, and beyond, we want to celebrate the ways we connect people and communities – and make that connection stronger than ever before.

Thank you.