



FACT SHEET

History of the Okotoks Art Gallery

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The beautiful brick train station on North Railway Street has been at the heart of the Okotoks community for over 80 years. Originally serving as a transportation hub, the station connected people to Okotoks bringing residents to a new land. And for the past 30 years the facility has served as a cultural hub connecting people to an inspiring array of visual and performing arts, programs and events.

The train station was built in 1929, at a cost of \$19,871, after the original wooden train station was destroyed by fire in 1928. The first station had been built in 1892 after the arrival of the Calgary-Edmonton railway. Over the years, the station has been managed by several station agents many of whom lived on the second floor with their families while the main floor served as the station, telegraph office and mail area. Okotoks also enjoyed excellent passenger service in the early years with two trains in the morning and two in the evening. In 1955 the conventional passenger trains were replaced by a day liner, however, with the development of highways and the popularity of automobiles the train lost patronage and was discontinued on July 2, 1971.

After being abandoned for close to 10 years, the Town of Okotoks purchased the old station from Canadian Pacific Railway in 1979 for \$1. A committee, originally known as the Okotoks and District Arts Council, was formed to look into the possibility of a future use for the facility. It was felt that the building, after restoration, could be used for the performing arts, historical and art displays, art classes, meetings and a multitude of other uses. After \$224,000 in renovations, The Station Cultural Centre opened in the fall of 1981 bringing new life to the station.

The building was owned by the Town of Okotoks and initially managed by the Okotoks Arts Council. It quickly developed into a cultural centre hosting art exhibitions, dance recitals, local, national and international musical performers, children's and adult art classes, soup luncheons, art auctions and became home to numerous handicraft and hobby clubs.

The facility, rebranded in 2009 at Okotoks Art Gallery at The Station, is owned and now managed by the Town of Okotoks, but continues to benefit from the valuable support and creative energy of the Okotoks Arts Council.

And what about the ghost? Yes, encounters of a female ghost occupying the station have been experienced by a few visitors. Although there have been a couple of deaths known to have occurred at the station, there are no records that a woman ever died there. However, this just adds to the mystery and history of this beautiful, old facility.

OKOTOKS ART GALLERY
53 North Railway Street

Monday to Friday | 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday | Noon to 5:00 pm

Phone: 403.938.3204

Operated by

