

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barkerville celebrates a century of cattle-drive culture at the *Cowboy and Drover Jubilee*

September 6, 2011 (Barkerville, BC) – From the earliest 19th-century goldfield cattle-drives to the square dance fervor of the 1940s and '50s, Barkerville has been proud to play venue to more than 100 years of cowboy culture. This September 9th to 11th, the historic town will honour that century of cowboy music, spoken word, and dance at the *Barkerville Cowboy and Drover Jubilee*.

The weekend-spanning event starts Friday, September 9th with registration for the first annual "Northern Star" amateur singing competition (sponsored by Vista Radio's 97fm The Wolf) available from 9:30am until 3:00pm at Barkerville's Visitor Reception Centre, along with general information about Jubilee activities. An informal "welcome" party at the House Hotel Saloon kicks off at 7:00pm, with open mic music and several special guest performances slated until midnight. Admission to the party is free (as is entrance to Barkerville after 3:00pm) and food and beverage can be purchased at the House Hotel throughout the evening.

Breakfast will be served Saturday, September 10th, at a variety of authentic Barkerville eateries. "Northern Star" registration will be available from 9:30am until noon at the Visitor Reception Centre, and at 10:30am an official Jubilee opening ceremony will take place under the big canvas tent at the front end of town. Under that same tent at 11:00am the first round of cowboy poetry will hold court until noon, and, according to Barkerville's Visitor Experiences Manager, James Douglas, guests are encouraged to take the stage with poems of their own - if the spirit so takes them.

"Cowboy poetry grew out of a tradition of improvised composition carried on by workers on cattle drives and ranches in the mid to late-1800s," said Douglas. "After a day of hard work these *drovers*, or cowboys as we call them, would gather around a campfire and entertain one another with tall tales and folk songs.

"We're aim to keep that tradition alive here in Barkerville, and invite our Jubilee guests to help us along."

From 11:30am until 3:00pm Saturday there will be a variety of musical performances by familiar cowboy troubadours like Allen Christie, Ed Wahl, Gordie West, and Budd Webb, as well as entries by the "Northern Star" contestants and a few surprise guests at the Jubilee music stages – Barkerville's Methodist Church, Kelly Saloon, and House Hotel.

A "Cowboy Lunch" fundraiser for the Friends of Barkerville Cariboo Goldfields Historical Society will serve-up at noon, and a second series of cowboy poems will be slated between 1:00pm and 2:00pm at the big canvas tent. Dinner will be served at a number of Barkerville eateries starting in the early afternoon, in anticipation of the "Northern Star" showcase that will take place at Barkerville's Theatre Royal at 5:00pm.

"We are particularly excited about the Northern Star amateur showcase," said Douglas.

"This is our first stab at the event, and the competition is meant to be more fun than ferocious, but thanks to our good friends at 97fm The Wolf in Prince George, as well as Spruce Capital Feeds and a variety of contributors from Barkerville's business community, the prize package for our winner is pretty amazing."

The official, adjudicated “Northern Star” showcase, consisting of four contest finalists plus several special guest appearances, takes place onstage at Barkerville’s renowned Theatre Royal, where the ultimate winner of the competition will be invited to perform with Newman & Wright Theatre Company’s 2011 Theatre Royal cast during a special, separately ticketed 7:00pm performance of its popular *Gold Rush Nuggets* musical variety show.

Sunday, September 11th will begin with breakfast at various Barkerville establishments, and a “Cowboy Church” service at St. Saviour’s, built in 1869, commences at 9:00am. The *Cowboy and Drover Jubilee* wraps-up just past noon, as Barkerville wishes “happy trails” to its cowboy visitors until this time next year.

“Whether you ride, play, sing, dance, or just like to whoop it up on the trail from time to time, Barkerville is *the* place to be September 9th to 11th,” said Douglas. “Thanks in large part to a dedicated group of cowboy culture enthusiasts, as well as financial assistance from BC Hydro and Barkerville Gold Mines, Ltd., the *Barkerville Cowboy and Drover Jubilee* is a great addition to Barkerville’s 2011 fall season.

“We can’t wait to see what pleasant surprises the weekend brings.”

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ABOUT BARKERVILLE HISTORIC TOWN

BARKERVILLE HISTORIC TOWN is the largest historic site in Western North America (www.barkerville.ca). Barkerville is provincially, nationally and internationally recognized for its historic significance associated with its place in western Canada’s gold rush era and the role the gold rush played in BC joining Canada. Barkerville is widely known as a “must see” for travel itineraries in western Canada. The historic town is also a significant contributor to the Cariboo regional economy and is widely regarded as a unique component of the regional identity.

The Barkerville Heritage Trust, as Barkerville’s operating and managing partner, works in conjunction with the Province of British Columbia, the owner and statutory guardian of Barkerville’s heritage resources, to ensure that Barkerville is efficiently managed, entertaining and educational to visitors, and financially stable as the premier heritage resource and tourism attraction for the Cariboo. The ultimate aim is to maintain and enhance Barkerville’s position as a nationally significant heritage resource and tourism attraction for British Columbia and Canada.

Barkerville is situated 80 km east of Quesnel, British Columbia in the foothills of the Cariboo Mountains, close to Troll Mountain Ski Resort and Bowron Lake Provincial Park. The nearby community of Wells (8 km from Barkerville) is the service and housing centre for the area (www.wellsbc.com) and is itself a dynamic cultural community, home of Island Mountain Arts, the acclaimed Toni Onley Artists’ Project, the International Celtic Harp School (www.imarts.com), the dynamic indie music festival ArtsWells (www.artswells.com), and the Sunset Theatre (www.sunset-theatre.com). Wells is also situated close to a wide variety of winter and summer outdoor activities.

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