

## ECHO DALE CORN ROAST - AUGUST 28<sup>TH</sup>

By Marina Phillips

Echo Dale has to be one of the greatest places to be developed around Medicine Hat! My kids and I usually go out there quite often during the summer months to cool off and relax. My son is an old hand at 'going to the beach' and my little girl (who just turned 2) is now beginning to discover all the different things you can do with sand. Oh goodie! I have taken some wonderful pictures and we have had a really good time out there!

Echo Dale is a highly effective multi-use area. All the attractions surrounding the beach serve to both make the location attractive and to preserve a very informative part of the western frontier history in Alberta.

Echo Dale Farm is a popular tour destination with local day cares and schools. Hundreds of children every season learn what it is like to live on, and run, a farm. The animals kept at Echo Dale are all traditional farm animals. They are not spooked by crowds. This gives the children the opportunity to take a really close look at them. There are also many pieces of restored farm machinery all around the farm site, giving visitors a look at the old-fashioned tractors and other early farming equipment.

The Echo Dale Farm Society was formed in 1988 to restore both the Farm Site and the Woolfrey House, a two-story log house built in 1887. The furnishings (circa 1900 to 1910) tell a wonderful tale about what it was like to live in early Alberta. It has four bedrooms and a working kitchen. Interpretive staff demonstrate wood stone cooking, soap making and other tasks that were done in early 1900s farmstead homes. They present an authentic snapshot of prairie farm life through tours of the house as well. Admission to the Woolfrey House is free, however donations are gratefully accepted.

A replica of a 1930s blacksmith shop is located up the hill from the Woolfrey House. Volunteer blacksmiths demonstrate the various skills and tools required to maintain a coal mine site or a working farm.

The barn was used in the 1930s to shelter mine horses from the Ajax Coal Mine, also located at Echo Dale. It was built in 1928 from materials salvaged from the CPR Railway Roundhouse, which was located at Dunmore. It was in use for over 25 years. Before the barn was built, mine horses lived in the mine night and day.

Grandma's Attic is located in the Ajax Building. It is a collection of antiques, trinkets and treasures from the early 1900s.

In addition to all this wonderful history, Echo Dale is home to a reservoir and beach for swimming, day use areas and fire pits. It has become a real oasis on the prairie!

The ongoing projects of the Echo Dale Farm Society have helped the City of Medicine Hat immensely! They have raised awareness in our community about understanding the lifestyles and living conditions of early rural Alberta.

The major fund-raising event of the year at Echo Dale is coming up soon! The Annual Echo Dale Corn Roast is held on the last Sunday in August. This year, it happens to fall on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 200 dozen cobs of corn are either boiled over an open fire pit or roasted on large barbeques and served to hundreds of eager people. The event has become very popular.

Entertainment includes: The Medicine Hat Black Powder Club as well as displays of miniature farm machinery, old time music, rope making and ice cream churning.

The event is sponsored by the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program. For more information about what's happening at Echo Dale, call Police Point Park Interpretive Centre at 529-6225. You can also contact Echo Dale Farm at 527-7344 for information about events, tours or to find out how to volunteer some of your time to this very worthwhile Medicine Hat Attraction.

Make sure to mark your calendar and take the whole family out to the Echo Dale Corn Roast on August 28<sup>th</sup>!

Have a terrific week, all!