

Heritage Highlights

Waking a Slumbering Giant: William Aberhart's Limousine



Alberta Premier William Aberhart,
circa 1935-1943

In the community...

Heritage Property Corporation is the proud sponsor of the upcoming Clare Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament being held on Thursday, September 17th at Cottonwood Golf and Country Club.

Proceeds from the event are used to purchase specialized beds for the Rosedale Hospice in Calgary.

For more information please call Joanne at 403-686-9717.

Heritage Property Corporation is embarking on a very different kind of restoration project. Still focused on preserving Alberta's rich history, this project aims to get Premier William Aberhart's 1937 McLaughlin Buick back on the road.

William Aberhart served as Premier of Alberta from 1935 to 1943, heading the controversial Social Credit Party. Beginning in the mid-1920s, and throughout his political career, he was widely known as a radio evangelist, earning the nickname "Bible Bill."

At the time, Aberhart's purchase of the car was highly controversial. When citizen's questioned Aberhart's spending, he publicly stated that the purchase was necessitated by the sudden breakdown of the second hand Oldsmobile he had driven prior to the purchase of the limousine. Alarmed by such public scrutiny of one of their vehicles, General Motors of Canada issued a letter to Aberhart, clarifying that his previous car was actually a Graham, not an Oldsmobile, and requesting Aberhart's cooperation in clearing the Oldsmobile name in the media.

The car, which Aberhart used as his private government limousine, was fitted with a glass partition and intercom system for communication with his chauffeur. The extra wide suicide-doors were designed to allow Aberhart, a man of substantial stature, to comfortably maneuver himself in and out of the vehicle. This unique feature further corroborates identification as Aberhart's car.

Upon locating the mammoth vehicle several years ago in Ontario, Heritage Property Corporation purchased the car and had it transported back to Alberta. The car had been stripped of its interior and engine and is mounted on a mismatched and modified frame. Heritage Property Corporation is currently in the process of locating and acquiring all of the missing parts needed to complete a full and accurate restoration.

It will take extensive rehabilitation efforts to return the custom limousine to its original splendor, but Heritage Property Corporation is optimistic that a restoration of this magnitude is worth the effort to preserve such a unique and important piece of Alberta's political history.

For more information about this project, or if you have any leads on available parts, please contact Erin at 403-231-1690.



Premier Aberhart's private car, a chauffeured 1937 McLaughlin Buick, before transport from Ontario.