



*The Deadwood Central Railroad in Gold Run Gulch, circa 1889, showing No. 1, Little Betsy (H.K. Porter Locomotive). Image courtesy of the Deadwood Historic Preservation Office.*

Deadwood's public trolley system, established in 1992, provides visitors a way to enjoy the scenic beauty of Deadwood Gulch. This interurban system is not a new concept, but rather one that was well rooted in Deadwood's history. Twelve years after Deadwood's incorporation, two separate interurban systems, the Deadwood Street Railroad (1888-1893) and the Deadwood Central Railroad (1888-1924), once traveled the streets of Deadwood.

#### **Deadwood Street Railroad 1888 - 1893**

The Deadwood Street Railroad was incorporated in August of 1888 and consisted of three horse-drawn street cars manufactured by the J.G. Brill Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It took two teams of horses to pull a trolley along the set of rails embedded in the center of Lee, Main, Sherman, and Charles Streets for a total distance of one and one half miles. After five years of service, the Deadwood Street Railroad was dismantled in 1893 due to the lack of patronage.

#### **Deadwood Central Railroad 1888 - 1924**

In 1888, The Deadwood Central Railroad was also incorporated, however, it was not functional until the following year. A 34,000 pound H.K. Porter steam locomotive was used to pull two passenger cars along a narrow gauge railroad line that connected the cities of Deadwood and Lead (present day US Highway 85). The initial route was 3.33 miles in length and gained 600 feet of elevation. Within its first year of operation, the Deadwood Central Railroad traveled an estimated

72,000 miles between the cities, carried approximately 29,000 passengers and generated over \$7,000 in fares.

In 1901, the locomotive was replaced by three electric trolley cars numbered 12150, 12151, and 12152. Each electric trolley was powered by two 660-volt electric motors. Energy used to power the trolleys came from a substation located at the base of McGovern Hill near the present day Mickelson Trailhead. At its height, the electric trolleys made 14 roundtrips daily, operated from 6:15 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. six days a week, and took fifteen minutes to make the run in either direction. An additional .64 miles of track was added which expanded the route to its maximum length of 3.97 miles.

By 1924, the electric trolley line was abandoned due to the advent and use of the automobile. Two of the three electric trolleys remained in the cities of Lead and Deadwood and were converted into dining cafes. Sixty-eight years would elapse before Deadwood's streets would see another public trolley system.



*The Deadwood Diner, located at 654 Main Street, circa 1963. Image taken from Mildred Fielder's book 'Railroads of the Black Hills'.*

#### **Deadwood Trolley Department 1992 - Present**

Beginning in 1992, the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission and City of Deadwood purchased six gasoline and diesel powered trolleys. Each trolley is powered by a Triton V-10 or a Cummings Diesel motor, and drives on average 25,000 miles per year shuttling over 250,000 riders. The Deadwood Trolleys are also used in parades, tours, and the "Trolley on the Trails" program, which allows disabled individuals the opportunity to access the Mickelson Trail free of charge.



#### **Deadwood Trolley Schedule**

Memorial Day to mid-September  
 Sunday to Thursday – 8:00 a.m. to midnight  
 Friday to Saturday – 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.

Winter Schedule  
 Sunday to Thursday – 8:00 a.m. to midnight  
 Friday to Saturday – 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.

Trolleys run at regular intervals between all hotels, motels, and other key points throughout Deadwood.

Cost is \$1.00 per ride. Hours are subject to change. The trolley schedule is posted on the back of the Main Street Trolley stop signs.

#### **For more information:**

City of Deadwood Trolley Department  
 102 Sherman Street  
 Deadwood, SD 57732  
 (605) 578-2600



Brochure updated by the City of Deadwood Archives, a Department of the Deadwood Historic Preservation Office June 2016. Images in this brochure courtesy of the Deadwood Public Library Centennial Archives, the South Dakota School of Mines, Mildred Fielder Collection, and the City of Deadwood Archives.

# DEADWOOD A Brief History



## DEADWOOD'S TROLLEY SYSTEM

Established 1888

### Summer Trolley Schedule

**Did You Know....**

- It takes twenty part-time drivers to operate the trolleys 16 to 20 hours per day.
- City of Deadwood residents over 60 years of age can ride for free.
- Each Deadwood Trolley is powered by a Triton V-10 and Cumming Diesel engine.
- Since 1992, four million visitors have used the Deadwood trolleys.
- On average, the Trolley Department goes through twenty-four tires, or 4 tires per trolley per year.
- Since 1992, the Deadwood trolleys combined have traveled 2.5 million miles. This equates to circling the planet 100 times!
- The Deadwood Trolleys average 250,000 passengers yearly.
- The trolleys operate 365 days a year.
- New Deadwood Trolleys cost between \$130,000 to \$140,000 and are replaced every seven years.
- Deadwood trolleys are manufactured by Molly Corporation of Ogunquit, Maine and Supreme Startrans of Goshen, Indiana.

