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### Calgary shot Hell on Wheels gets big ratings



[lisa.wilton](#) - November 7th, 2011



Local crew members are keeping their fingers crossed that Hell on Wheels will steam back into Alberta next year. While it's a tad too early to uncork the champagne bottles, the new western series premiered to huge ratings on AMC Sunday night.

The locally shot show is the network's second-highest series premiere ever (after The Walking Dead) and attracted 4.4 million viewers in the U.S. alone.

"It was really hard work, so this makes it a little bit worth it," said Calgary based set decorator Paul Healy on Monday.

"Everyone strove to make a really great product so there was some confidence it would do well. But it did better than I expected, no doubt about that."

Producer Chad Oakes of Nomadic Pictures received the good ratings news from AMC Monday afternoon.

"We were absolutely thrilled to get that phone call," he said.

"We were cautiously optimistic, due to our success with AMC and our mini-series (Broken Trail) that we did with them in 2005, which is still the highest-rated original program in the channel's history. But to come in with 4.4 million viewers on the premiere ..... We are simply over the moon."

Oakes' Nomadic Pictures partner Mike Frislev added the combination of younger viewers who stayed on after the new episode of The Walking Dead and AMC's core western audience helped boost ratings.

"It should make for a 'long train a-running' for Hell On Wheels," said Frislev.

According to Nielsen ratings, Hell on Wheels delivered 2.4 million viewers in the coveted 18-49 demographic.

The gritty, post-Civil War series – which stars Anson Mount, Common and Colm Meaney – was filmed on the nearby Tsuu T'ina Nation between May and August this year.

More than 200 Alberta crew people worked through some miserable weather conditions to create the show, which injected \$22 million into the local economy

"I congratulate the entire cast and crew of Hell on Wheels for pulling off a project of this scope," said AMC president Charlie Collier in a statement.

Hell on Wheels airs on AMC at 8 p.m. Sundays.

