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## AMC'S HELL ON WHEELS – LAND & LOCATION REBOOT



*Image – screenrant.com*

Launched in 2011, AMC's *Hell on Wheels* dramatizes the building of the first transcontinental railroad across North America in the immediate post-US Civil War years. The term "Hell on Wheels" refers to the mobile tent town that followed rail workers along that construction, in an attempt to siphon wages with the attractions of drinking saloons, gambling, and paid female companionship.

The series' first four seasons focused on the westward-building Union Pacific railroad (followed by the mobile tent town) – Season 5 will shift to its competitor, the eastward-aiming Central Pacific. The Union Pacific built across modern-day Nebraska, the tip of Colorado, and southern Wyoming, to meet the Central Pacific in northern Utah in May of 1869. The Central Pacific moved thru California and Nevada to get to that point.

The production team for *Hell on Wheels* faces the challenge of replicating the difficult geographic and environmental conditions that rail work crews faced, and they have chosen Alberta, Canada, as the exterior location to best do so. For Season 1, the team rented 15,000 acres from the T'suu Tina Nation, an Indigenous reserve southwest of downtown Calgary. Season 2 was filmed near the Bow River, southeast of the city.

Season 3's production, taking place outside of Calgary near the Bow and Highwood rivers, was halted at one point by the massive rainfall that hit Alberta in 2013. That rain resulted in the evacuation of cast & crew and the flooding of the carefully-crafted set and buildings. Once the waters subsided, the crew worked around-the-clock to rebuild the location. The majority of Season 4 was shot south of Calgary at Albertina Farms, with the crew building a town at the location to represent the major railroad point of Cheyenne, Wyoming (WY). This 2014 AMC-produced clip gives some insight into that location prior to the launch of Season 4:

0:00 / 5:10

Cheyenne Set Tour: Hell on Wheels: Season 4

The major narrative shift in the series for Season 5 will take production into new locations. Lead character Cullen Bohannon (Anson Mount) has moved from working on the Union Pacific to the Central Pacific in the year 1868. This plot-shift will take filming into areas chosen to represent the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which lie primarily in east-central California. The series will also now highlight the contributions of thousands of Chinese workers who helped build the Central Pacific thru that difficult and dangerous terrain. As a follow-up to history, the still-existing Union Pacific now owns that Central Pacific route.

New locations will now represent both the mountainous geography facing the Central Pacific and a Union Pacific that has moved west of Cheyenne, WY. CL Ranch, west of Calgary, will do double-duty as Truckee, California, and Laramie, WY. The Kananaskis Country park system, some 40 miles west of the ranch, serves as the mountains the Central Pacific must cross.



[Click to Enlarge / AMC Image](#)

**This recently-released 2015 AMC-produced clip gives a look into the set and location production for Season 5:**

0:00 / 3:32

## Set Tour With Anson Mount: Hell On Wheels

The upcoming 14-episode fifth and final season will actually be rolled out over a period of two years. The first seven episodes debut in 2015 with the second set airing in 2016. A preview video can be seen at the post [HoW S5 Preview](#). Season 5 of *Hell on Wheels* premieres on AMC this Saturday, July 18th at 9 (ET) / 8 (CT).