

AMC Moves 'Hell on Wheels' to Saturdays this Summer



CHRIS LARGE/AMC

Anson Mount

The drama returns in August to anchor a day of classic Western reruns, while the network also has acquired the Clint Eastwood series "Rawhide."

AMC is shifting Western drama *Hell on Wheels* to Saturdays this summer beginning Aug. 3 with the show's third season premiere. The move will open up a third night of original programming for the network which is home to critical hits *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad* and audience favorite *Walking Dead*. But unlike the broadcast networks' habit of reruns and schedule spackle on Saturdays, AMC is moving *Wheels* to capitalize on the success it has had on Saturdays with reruns of classic Western movies.

"A new episode of *Hell on Wheels* on Saturday night after a full day of western fan favorites is going to be like the saddle on top of the horse," **Charlie Collier**, AMC president and general manager, said in a statement. "This is a programmer's dream – to have a genre specific, 14-hour lead-in to one of your highest rated originals. We are so excited about this opportunity to entertain AMC's audience in a new way."

Hell on Wheels averaged 2.4 million viewers in its second season, a respectable rating that is likely to drop off with the show's move to Saturdays during the summer months when fewer viewers are watching television. But AMC sees an opportunity to capture the men watching its weekend Westerns on a night that is almost universally filled with reruns or news programming including the CBS program *48 Hours*. As insurance, AMC is adding to its inventory of classic Westerns with a slew of new acquisitions from Paramount Pictures including

El Dorado, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, *The Shootist* and *The Sons of Katie Elder*. The network also will attempt to bring more buzz to the night with anniversary celebrations several classics westerns including the 60th anniversary of *Hondo* and the 50th anniversary of *McLintock!*, both starring **John Wayne**, as well as the 45th anniversary of *Hang 'em High* and the 40th anniversary of *High Plains Drifter*, both starring **Clint Eastwood**.

The network has also acquired the television series, *Rawhide*, starring Eastwood, which joins *Rifleman* beginning April 20. Additionally the network will rerun the miniseries *Lonesome Dove* and bow its sequel, *Return to Lonesome Dove*.

Hell on Wheels endured some production delays at the outset of its 10-episode third season. **John Shiban** - who had been elevated to showrunner after AMC declined to renew the contracts of original showrunners **Joe** and **Tony Gayton** - departed the series before the start of production on season three to work on a horror drama for FX with *Sons of Anarchy*'s **Kurt Sutter**.

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