

# SANTA TRAINS RETURN 2022!

- Greg Elems and Eugene Vicknair



Photo by Micheal Clawson

After a two year pause due to the COVID pandemic, Santa Trains returned to the WPRM. Steve Habeck and family handled the bulk of the decorations, with help from Ethan Doty and others. Ron Berriesford also pitched in, donating additional decorations and lights to add to the festivities.

As our previous Santa and Mrs. Claus, Dave Rudolph and Linda Knudsen, had decided to retire from the roles, a search started months earlier to find the new Claus couple. Various persons fell through until we were right up against the first Santa Train day. Thankfully, Steam CMO Roger Stabler stepped into the role for the first three nights and delighted the kids with his rendition of the Jolly Ol' Elf.

One beloved aspect of Santa Trains is always the home baked cookies served up with hot drinks in the baggage car. Cookies this year came from Mary Ann Vicknair, Louise Dunbar, Eugene Vicknair, Janet Steeper, Charlie Spikes and Duane

van der Veen. The serving crew was led by Ali Doty and included several members of the Habeck family.

Those first three nights, December 3 and 9-10, would prove challenging to both visitors and volunteers alike. Rain and snow, coupled with freezing temperatures, covered the museum both weekends and kept attendance low. This despite the eagerness of folks to experience the restarted Santa Trains. Our operating crews had to handle the ways that cold weather impacts historic equipment, but they pulled off a safe operation with few hiccups.

The final days, December 16-17, while having low temperatures, brought clear skies and a flood of visitors. Attendance was strong both the Friday and Saturday while a new Santa and Mrs. Claus stepped in: Matt and Elizabeth Cruse. In the end, we had over 200 carloads of visitors on the final two nights and collected over 500 pounds of canned goods for the EPCAN food

bank during the course of the entire event. The EPCAN Board of Directors sent a letter of appreciation to the FRRS for our support of their mission. Special thanks to Bart Hansen who handled much of the gate duty out in the cold.

During all five Santa Train nights, we heard again and again how happy everyone was to see the event return. We also had a fair number of first time riders, coming to see what it was all about and promising to return next year. Thank you to all the folks who helped with advertising and promoting the event, including Patty and Michael Clawson, Paul Finnegan and Eugene Vicknair. Also, Jack Sutton from Reno Channel 2 filmed a segment for his Reno Backroads show during the third weekend. The video is viewable on the

WPLives.org website and our YouTube channel.

It took a lot of folks to make this happen. Thank you to all our volunteers for getting the restarted Santa Trains on the roll:

Steve Habeck - Jackie Habeck - Kathy and Kevin Errecart - Jenifer Harley - Zayden Errecart - Roger Stabler - Matt and Elizabeth Cruse - Greg Elems - David Elems - Duane van der Veen - Charlie Spikes - Ann Cary - Breckyn Shirley - Fred Elenbaas - Ali Doty - Bill Parker - Paul Finnegan - Bart Hansen - Louise Dunbar - Mary Ann Vicknair - Eugene Vicknair - Janet Steeper - Ron Berriesford - Ed Powell - Patty and Michael Clawson



*Santa and his helpers wish all of you a happy holiday season from the WPRM on the last night of Santa Trains 2022. - 12/17/22*