

# SANTA TRAINS 2023

- Eugene Vicknair

Once again we hosted our annual Santa Trains and got some good visitor ship for the event. Our first night was Saturday, December 9. Duane Vander Veen took on Santa duties that night, but the surprise guest was Bob Danner, brother of Patty Clawson of Big Fish Creations, who roamed the trains as Santasquatch. The kids had a field day getting candy canes from a Sasquatch wearing Santa's hat and beard.

The following two weekends, with trains running Fridays and Saturdays on December 15-16 and 22-23 just saw attendance build. The cookie crew of Ali Doty and Mary and Jackie Habeck kept things moving in the baggage car, with homemade cookies provided by Ron Berriesford and his wife, Mary Ann Vicknair, Eugene Vicknair and Louise Dunbar. Ann Cary and Breckyn Shirley took turns handling the Museum Store, with an assist from Eugene Vicknair on the first Saturday. Bryn Shirley and Olivia Simone took money at the front gate. Decorations for the museum were put up by Steve Habeck and family, Ethan Doty and others.



Trains operations were covered by Charlie Spikes, Duane Vander Veen, Brian Waller, Ethan Doty, Greg Elems, Eugene Vicknair, Kevin Errecart, Nicholas Manos, Steve Habeck, Fred Elenbaas, Matt Elems, Janet Steeper and David Elems. Visitors got to enjoy the sight and sound of WP SW1500 1503 and SP GP9 2873 operating in multiple. A look at the numbers shows nice crowds even on the usually "quiet" Friday evenings. Our first night, Saturday December 2, the crew operated 7 caboose train runs and over half the runs carried more than 30 riders. The next weekend, Friday, December 8 saw 8 runs occur with each carrying 20 to 30 or more riders. On Saturday, December 9, there was only 7 runs, but 6 of them carried more than 30 riders. The final weekend was the biggest, with 8 runs each night. Friday, December 15 saw over half the runs carrying over 30 riders, while Saturday, December 16 was the big blow out, with an estimated 500 people visiting the museum and filling each caboose run.



Matt and Elizabeth Cruse took over as Santa and Mrs. Claus for the two weekends, with Bob Danner making some repeat appearances as Santasquatch on the Saturdays. Thank you to Patty and Michael Clawson for taking pictures and helping with promotions, which included radio spots, Facebook postings and a poster designed by Eugene Vicknair.

We have been building bigger and bigger crowds each event since returning from the COVID pause. Please consider joining us for Santa Train next year, either as a volunteer or just coming to check it out!