

SANTA TRAIN 2009

- David Epling, Museum Manager

Another Christmas season has come and gone and, once again, the WPRM hosted Santa Trains on the first two Saturdays in December. The Museum received a lot of support this year from the community. Several businesses donated money to help us offset the costs of putting on the event. Portola High School's cooking class made the cookies this year.

Every November, WPRM Yardmaster / FRRS VP Steve Habeck begins setting up the trains for the event. Set-up volunteers Craig Simmons, Charlie Spikes and his son, Bart Hansen, Kevin Arendt, Ed Powell, Duane Vanderveen, Mary Habeck, Kathy Habeck, Jennifer Habeck, Kevin Errcart, Vicki Krois and her boyfriend (with my apologies to Vicki as I cannot remember his name), Bruce Veilleux and Vicki Epling dug all the supplies and decorations out and got everything inside the baggage car and other areas decorated for the big show. If I have left any names out, you have my apologies now.

We moved the gift shop into the Sacramento Northern 1642 caboose as it could be heated. FRRS members Kevin & Janet Arendt set up a bake sale in the caboose as well, they donated the baked goods and gave the museum the proceeds.

For the first weekend, on Saturday the 5th, the crowds were heavy and Mother Nature obliged us with a nice blanket of snow on the first night, adding to the snow already on the ground. Watching Duane Vanderveen with a snow shovel is like watching a one-man bulldozer. Toss in occasional light flurries the mood was set. Our Operating Department once again demonstrated why we are the class act in the Railroad Museum community. They were outstanding in their operation of the lighted and decorated train itself, which always functions as the star of this show. The crowds were large and steady enough that the train was in a constant load and go cycle.

The Second week was a lot more of a challenge: between the two Saturdays, Mother Nature unloaded a series of snowstorms that had us all



*The 2009 edition of the Santa Train prepares for another run.
- Tom Carter photo*



Simmons, took only a very few minutes to clear the loading platform and walkways.

As the snow began, we found we were going to operate on a skeleton crew, but operate we were going to do. Charlie Spikes and David Epling crewed the head end of the train, alternating runs as engineer. Craig Simmons, Ethan Doty, Dale Doty, Ed Powell and Duane Vanderveen filled out the rest of the crew. Around start time, snow once again began to fall heavily, however, much to our surprise, cars and trucks filled the parking lot. By 7:30 PM, the lot was starting to clear out and we began the process of draining the water systems and winterizing the museum. By 8:30 PM, the building and gates were locked up. The Dotys and Ed Powell weathered the storm, which by now had added another 6 inches of snow, by staying the night at the museum in the heated cabooses.

Overall, the two nights were outstanding successes. For myself, it was a great learning opportunity to run a passenger train in the snow. Stopping it in those conditions are a lot different than in the summer.

Santa Trains 2010 will again be the first two Saturdays, December 4 and 11, 2010. We hope to see you there. Also, don't forget Portola Railroad Days, August 19 – 22, 2010.

wondering if we should go ahead with the event. Saturday, December 12 dawned gray and ugly. There was 18" of snow on the ground at the museum; nevertheless the show must go on. First order of business was to fire up Southern Pacific TR6A 1100 and run light about the balloon to clear the track. Human Bulldozer Duane Vanderveen arrived and, along with Craig

November 2009 Board Meeting Motions and Actions Summary - continued

Director's Reports

Vicknair – Report on feedback from riders of the Mini-Zephyr. Comments were overwhelmingly positive and everyone enjoyed the museum immensely.

Department Reports

Funding – 2009 End of Year Fundraising Letter was shown to the Board. President McClure requested that the general fund be stressed since we need regular operating funds. Reminded that members should review if their companies do matching donations for employee's charitable donations.

Publications – Train Sheet status. Written report submitted. One issue at printer, one in production.

Advertising – Update on activities. Written report submitted. Discussion about finding volunteers for

Society Adopt-A-Highway idea.

Facilities – Written report submitted on recent facilities work. Shower car dewatered

Trackwork – Lots of work done on balloon loop on two weekends before CZ train arrived.

Committee Reports

Dunsmuir Railroad Days 2010 – Written report submitted updating planning for event.

Public Comments

· Donna Mills with Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Co-Op spoke to the Board. The Co-Op donated \$100 to support Santa Trains. We also received a check for \$50 from State Farm Insurance and \$500 from Sierra Pacific Power, both for Santa Trains.

Closed Session

Meeting adjourned to closed session at 2:15 PM and