

All aboard the Christmas trains!



Travel Baker County/Contributed image

Ride a train and see Santa this month on the Sumpter Valley Railroad, Dec. 10-12.

By **Lisa Britton**
Go! Magazine

SUMPTER — There's something magical, Mike Downing says, about riding a steam train in winter.

"Riding a steam train in the winter time brings out the kid in everyone," he said. "You get to see the steam from the locomotive in a completely different way than in the summer time."

It is, he says, like a real version of a toy train under the Christmas tree.

"The Sumpter Valley Christmas train brings that little train around the tree to life," he said.

Downing is the facilities manager and brakeman for the Sumpter Valley Railroad, and this month he'll also be the conductor for the Christmas trains on Dec. 10, 11 and 12.

"You know Tom Hanks in the 'The Polar Express'? That'll be me," he said.

Passengers can sit in either the enclosed heated cars or in the open car.

The weekend starts with a night train on Friday, Dec. 10. It leaves McEwen Depot at 7 p.m. for a full run to Sumpter and back. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$22 for seniors and military, \$15 for ages 3-17, or \$70 for a family of four.

Saturday will feature short runs leaving from the Sumpter Station at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Fares are \$18.50 for adults, \$15 for seniors and military and \$10 for ages 3-17. This day also features Sumpter's Christmas parade at 5 p.m., followed by the tree lighting.

Another full train is set for Sunday, Dec. 12, leaving McEwen Depot at noon. Passengers will have a 40-minute layover in Sumpter to enjoy cookies and hot chocolate at the Sumpter Depot. Tickets

are \$25 for adults, \$22 for seniors and military, \$15 for ages 3-17, or \$75 for a family of four.

GETTING THERE

McEwen Depot is 23 miles southwest of Baker City on Highway 7. The Sumpter Station is in the town of Sumpter

near the entrance to the Dredge State Heritage Area on Austin Street.

RESERVATIONS

Tickets must be bought in advance. Go to www.sumptervalleyrailroad.org, email info@sumptervalleyrailroad.org or call 541-894-2268.

SUMPTER VALLEY RAILROAD CHRISTMAS TRAINS

Dec. 10 from McEwen Depot, 7 p.m.

Dec. 11 from Sumpter Station, 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2 p.m., 3:30 p.m.

Dec. 12 from McEwen Depot, noon

Reservations: www.sumptervalleyrailroad.org

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