



The Eagle Cap Excursion Train, run by the Friends of the Joseph Branch, makes its way back to the Elgin Depot. The train, which did not operate in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, returns to the rails Independence Day Weekend.

Wallowa County Chieftain, File

# Eagle Cap Excursion Train will start Independence Day weekend

Eighteen rides on slate from July 3-Oct. 23

Chieftain staff

ELGIN — Independence Day weekend will not only bring in the celebration of our nation's birth, but the official return of the Eagle Cap Excursion Train.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the train to a halt during 2020. The Friends of the Joseph Branch, who manage the train, announced in April it would be indeed returning in 2021. That first date has been set for July 3, according to a press release.

The later start date gives the organization more time to prepare for the ever-changing measures from the state level and for more people to get shots against COVID-19.

"We usually launch the

season with the Mother's Day Brunch, but in order to ensure we have all of our new safety measures in place and more people are vaccinated against the virus, our first trip starts a little later than normal," Ed Spaulding, president of the Friends, said in the press release.

This year, there will be 18 train rides, starting on that first Saturday in July and running through Saturday, Oct. 23. Most of the trips are scheduled for Saturdays, but a handful of midweek trips that run during the afternoon and evening are slated. Two train robberies are on tap, as the Gold Rush Bandits, riders on horseback who "rob" the train, will take part again.

There will be fewer passengers to allow for social distancing and a face-mask requirement for both volunteers and passengers, except for when people aboard are eating or drinking. A new

ventilation system that filters the air as it circulates will also be installed.

"We believe these measures will provide passengers with the confidence they can safely enjoy the scenic train rides," Spaulding said in the release.

There is a bonus opportunity for riders this year, though it is limited to one passenger per trip. Riders have the opportunity to reserve a ride in the cab of the engine alongside the engineers during the return trip.

"Get the unique perspective from sitting high above the track, in the engine and talk with the engineers for the entire ride back to Elgin," the release states. "Your cab ride includes a special railroad cap, along with lunch and a seat in the passenger car during the first leg of the trip."

This option, for those 18 or older, is by reservation only. Cost is the original price of the ticket for a reg-

ular ride, plus an additional \$200 for the ride in the cab.

Ten Depot in La Grande and Chuckwagon Sisters Catering in Enterprise are providing the lunches for the train rides.

According to its website, all but one of the Saturday trips are \$35 for youths age 3-16, \$70 for adults, and \$65 for those 60 and older. Kids under 3 ride free. A pair of longer trips on July 21 and Oct. 9 are \$40, \$75 and \$70. The train robberies take place on July 24 and Sept. 4.

The full schedule for the summer, and a description of the trips, is available online at [www.eagle-captrainrides.com](http://www.eagle-captrainrides.com).

The website is also where riders can book a spot on a trip, or they can do so by calling the Elgin Depot at 541-437-3652. Those interested in volunteering can call Peggy Weishaar at 541-786-0094, or email [weishaar73@gmail.com](mailto:weishaar73@gmail.com) for more information.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

SEE THE EXPANDED ONLINE CALENDAR AT [EASTERNOREGONEVENTS.COM](http://EASTERNOREGONEVENTS.COM)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23 — THURSDAY, JUNE 24

**IN A LANDSCAPE: CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE WILD:** 6-9 p.m. Wallowa Lake State Park. Outdoor concert featuring a 9-foot Steinway grand piano on a flatbed trailer. Music is transmitted to concert-goers via wireless headphones. Bring your own lawn chairs. Tickets are required due to limited capacity. [tickets@inalandscape.org](mailto:tickets@inalandscape.org)

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

**THE NEZ PERCE STORY — A WEEKLY DISCUSSION:** 1 p.m. The Josephy Center for Arts and Culture. A summer-long introduction to the walmama band of the Nez Perce Indians who made the county home for millennia, before settler arrival: How did they live? When and why were they forced out? Who were Old and Young Chief Joseph? Where are the Nez Perce now? The discussions will take place on the second floor of the Josephy Center building, right next to the permanent Nez Perce display. No fees, but donations will be appreciated. For questions, call Rich at 541-432-0505.

FRIDAY, JUNE 25

**WOODLANDS & WATER-SHED FESTIVAL TO GO:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Family-related activity bags are available to pick up at the Maxville Heritage Center, 103 N. Main St. in Joseph, the Wallowa County Courthouse Gazebo in Enterprise, and the

Wallowa Public Library in Wallowa. There will also be a raffle families can enter when picking up the to-go bags that will offer local prizes. Sponsored by Wallowa Resources and Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center.

**OPEN MIC READING & POTLUCK:** 6 p.m. potluck, 7 p.m. open mic. Fishtrap's backyard at 400 E. Grant St. in Enterprise. Fishtrap's first live, in-person event in over a year. Admission is free. For more information, visit <https://fishtrap.org/summertide-gathering>.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 26 MOUNTAIN HIGH BRONCS & BULLS:** 3-7:30 p.m. Wallowa County Fairgrounds. Big names, big close-up experience and big fun. Bull riders combined with ranch saddle broncs, plus the wild horse race and mutton busting for the little ones. Free admission.

**ONGOING A.A. online meetings:** [oregonaadistrict29.org](http://oregonaadistrict29.org).

**Building Healthy Families:** 541-426-9411.

**Community Connection:** 541-426-3840.

**Enterprise Public Library:** 541-426-3906.

**Fishtrap:** 541-426-3623.

**Hurricane Creek Grange:** 541-605-8233.

**Josephy Center for Arts & Culture:** 541-432-0505.

**Wallowa Public Library:** 541-886-4265.

**Wallowology:** 541-263-1663.

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Wallowa.com



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