

All aboard! THE EAGLE CAP EXCURSION TRAIN

By Dick Mason
The Observer

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, which manages the train, announced the first trip of the summer will be July 3.

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.

Nearly 18 rides are planned, 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.

Fewer tickets will be sold to allow for social distancing and face masks will be required for both volunteers and passengers, except when people aboard are eating or drinking. A new ventilation system that filters the air as it circulates is also being installed.

"We believe these measures will provide passengers with the confidence they can safely enjoy the scenic train rides," said Ed Spaulding, president of the Friends of the Joseph Branch.

Ten Depot Street in La Grande and Chuckwagon Sisters Catering in Enterprise are providing the lunches for the train rides, which depart from and return to the Elgin Depot.

The full schedule for the summer, and a description of the trips, is available at www.eaglecaptrainrides.com. The website is also where riders can book a seat on the train, or they can do so by calling the Elgin Depot at 541-437-3652.



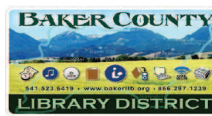
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BONUS: RIDE ALONGSIDE THE ENGINEERS

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

Riding in the cab affords a unique perspective, sitting high above the track, and the experience gives you a chance to talk with the engineers on the ride back to Elgin.

This option, for those 18 or older, is by reservation only. Cost is the original price of the ticket for a regular ride, plus an additional \$200 for the ride in the cab, which includes a special railroad cap, along with lunch and a seat in the passenger car during the first leg of the trip.



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Schedule of Events

Thursday	Carnival....3:00 pm - 9:00 pm Ed Miller Xtreme Bull Riding....6:30 pm
Friday	Parade....2:00 pm Carnival....2:00 pm - 9:00 pm PRCA Rodeo & Horse Racing....4:00 pm
Saturday	4-H & FFA Livestock Auction....8:00 am (Buyers Only) Carnival....1:00 pm - 9:00 pm PRCA Rodeo & Horse Racing....2:00 pm
Sunday	PRCA Rodeo & Horse Racing....1:30 pm

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RAIN OR SHINE, EOLS IS ALWAYS A GOOD TIME!