



Thomas, Polar Express Events Added to Busy East Broad Top Season

Press Release

The East Broad Top Railroad's 2011 season will be its busiest in nearly 30 years, with visits by **Thomas the Tank Engine** and the **Polar Express**, many other special events, and an expanded operating schedule. The historic steam railroad, a popular family destination since 1960, will open for the year on Saturday, May 7—National Train Day—and will run a **Mother's Day dinner train** at 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 8.

Thomas, the really useful little blue engine beloved by children since the 1980s, will make his first-ever appearance at the East Broad Top July 1-4 and 9-10. Children and their families will be able to have their pictures taken with Thomas and meet Sir Topham Hatt, the railway director. Other Day Out With Thomas events will include face-painting, a hay-bale maze, storytelling, an Imagination Station, and more. Tickets are already on sale through the railroad's Web site (<http://ebtrr.com>).

The season's other big offering will be the famous Polar Express, which will carry families to the North Pole Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings from Thanksgiving through December 23. Riders will be served hot chocolate and read to from the popular book of the same name as the steam-powered train makes its way north to Santa's decorated wonderland.

Also new this year are two programs for railfans. **Engineer for an Hour** will let a limited number of enthusiasts learn how to run No. 15, a steam engine built for the railroad by the Baldwin Locomotive Company in 1914. And **High Iron University**, offered July 26 to 30 with the Railroader's Memorial Museum in Altoona, will give participants a full week's worth of railroading experience in everything from track work to engine maintenance.

In addition to opening in May—a month earlier than it has in recent years—the railroad will expand its Saturday/Sunday operating schedule by running trains on Thursdays and Fridays in July, the first part of August, and all of October. Also on the railroad's calendar:

* June 17-19: The **Central Pennsylvania Ragtime Festival** includes two gala concerts by performers with worldwide reputations, plus a ragtime open house and informal performances on the station platform.

* June 19: A **Father's Day dinner train** departs at 1 p.m.

* July 16: **Fireworks trains** will operate in the evening, including a 6 p.m. **dinner train**.

* August 13-14: **Civil War Weekend/Community Appreciation Days** will bring Union and Confederate reenactors to pitch camp at the railroad and defend its trains from raiding parties

and ambushes. A **dinner train** departs Saturday, August 13, at 7 p.m.

* October 7-9: The **EBT Fall Spectacular** offers a busy schedule for railroad lovers of all sorts, including special steam-powered coal and freight trains for photographers, mixed trains, and runs by the railroad's unique 1927 gas-electric unit, M-1. A **dinner train** operates Saturday, October 8.

* October 29-30: **Halloween trains** haunt the railroad late into the night.

The East Broad Top, a three-foot-gauge railroad that opened in 1873 to carry coal on a 33-mile route, is the only narrow-gauge railroad east of the Rocky Mountains that still runs its original equipment on its original line. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964. Visitors can also tour the railroad's roundhouse and its circa-1905 machine shops, ride original track speeders, and visit the adjoining Rockhill Trolley Museum. The railroad is operated by the not-for-profit East Broad Top Railroad Preservation Association with help from the all-volunteer Friends of the East Broad Top. For more information, visit the EBT Web site at <http://ebtrr.com>.

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