



**GALVESTON
RAILROAD MUSEUM**

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2023 POLAR EXPRESS A SUCCESS!

GALVESTON, TX – The 2023 spectacular holiday event, The POLAR Express Train Ride, presented annually by the Galveston Railroad Museum, broke all records of attendance. More than 40,000 riders attended the much-loved Christmas themed event, most dressed in pajamas, who enjoyed the outstanding performances by the cast of ETC Theater Company, delicious hot chocolate and cookies while taking in the newly decorated train cars and North Pole. The family-oriented event is a holiday tradition for guests who travel from across the U.S. to attend.

An Official THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride, the event is licensed by Rail Events Inc. on behalf of Warner Bros. Consumer Products, Inc. who holds an exclusive license to operate THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Rides in the US, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

The event brings to life THE POLAR EXPRESS film based on Chris Van Allsburg's classic Christmas picture book, which tells the story of a boy who takes a magical Christmas Eve train ride to the North Pole to receive a special gift from Santa. First published by the Houghton Mifflin Company in 1985, *The Polar Express* became an instant family favorite and has sold more than 12 million copies worldwide. In 1986 it won the prestigious Caldecott Medal for Illustration.

Ranked among the top 5 Polar Express rides in the nation by Rail Events, Inc., the production, November 10 – December 23, serves the Galveston community as an economic engine fueling numerous industries including hotels, short term rentals, caterers, electricians, plumbers, janitorial, carpenters, downtown merchants, restaurants, seamstresses, designers, equipment rentals, audio and visual technicians, decorators, and other attractions, as well as providing part time jobs, and various contract workers to staff the production . The event advertises in print and online publications nationwide as well as aggressive radio and television campaigns to support ticket sales.

Prior to departure guests gather in the train depot to enjoy a delightful one act play as a prelude to the adventure. After boarding, the experience comes to life as the train departs for a round-trip journey to the North Pole – yes, the train really moves along the tracks. Set to the sounds of the motion picture soundtrack, passengers relive the magic of the classic story as they are whisked away on THE POLAR EXPRESS™ for the one-hour trip to meet Santa. On board, the conductor works his way through the coach to punch golden tickets before hot chocolate and a delicious cookie are served by dancing chefs. Passengers then read along with the classic children's book, *The Polar Express*. Santa and his helpers board the train to greet passengers and each guest is given the first gift of Christmas. During the ride, characters on each car lead onboard entertainment – just like in the film! Each guest takes home a keepsake sleigh bell and souvenir golden ticket in addition to the wonderful memories made on the magical trip. Just like the kids in the book, families are encouraged to wear their pajamas for the ride!

The Polar Express Train Ride supports the general operations of the Galveston Railroad Museum, a major attraction on Galveston Island. Nestled in a fully restored train depot that sits on 5 acres of railyard, the museum offers a fully immersive experience to visitors. A popular destination, more than 250,000 enjoy exhibits, presentations and the opportunity to step inside a train to experience the golden age of rail, and to learn about the history and innovative progression of railroad technology. Current exhibits include *Dining in Style*, featuring a snapshot of the museum's porcelain china and silver service collection; *The Orphan Train; Legacy of the Pullman Porter; Traveling on a City at Sea: The Story of the Battleship Texas; Ghosts of Travelers Past; Santa Fe Calendars Collection* of Harry Briscoe; and *Santa Fe Travel Posters* for the 1950 and 1960's. New is the monthly **Rail Finds** exhibit in the depot that features a rarely seen artifact from the museum's collection. The annual Rail Baron's Ball supports educational outreach that includes the Arthur R. Carmody, Jr. Memorial Railroad Library, student field trips, curriculum guides and lesson plans for grades Pre-K through high school, sensory tours for autistic individuals, and an Oral History Program. The museum is supported by grants, contributions, admission, Harborside Express train rides, membership, and special events.

Upcoming events include the **Galveston Steampunk Festival**, April 6, **RailFest: Model Train Rally**, April 27 & 28, and the **Rail Baron's Ball, Wild Wild West**, October 5, 2024.

The 2024 POLAR Express Train Ride will be November 8 – December 23. Galveston Railroad Museum members may purchase tickets August 1 – 21. Open ticket sales begin August 22. The Galveston Railroad Museum is located at 2602 Santa Fe Place. (409) 765-5700. Members enjoy benefits year-round. For additional information go to www.galvestonRRmuseum.org.