



## CHRISTMAS IN DOWNTOWN VAN BUREN!

### Heritage Church and the Old Town Merchants Association team up for “Trains! Trains! Trains! The Van Buren Great Train Experience”

The inaugural “Trains! Trains! Trains! The Great Van Buren Train Experience,” will take place at various locations in downtown Van Buren this Holiday Season.

The event will take place at eight locations displaying model electric trains, each with a different theme:

- Van Buren Public Library, *It's A Wonderful Life Village and Train*
- Old Frisco Train Depot – *Boy Scout Train and Campground*
- Willy Nilly – *Dinosaurs*
- Firefly Boutique and Gifts- *Christmas Train*
- Chapters On Main – *Upside Down Train*
- Boom-A-Rang Diner – *Old West Train with Cowboys and Indians*
- Van Buren Senior Center – *Circus Set and 1960's All Aboard Set, Train from the 1950's American Flyer*
- Women's Literary Book Club – *(Large Scale Trains) Giraffe Train, Thomas the Tank Engine, 1920's & 1930's Trains, and Polar Express*

The train displays are part of the collection of Bob Bretch of Crawford County, who will stage all of the displays with the help of local volunteers. Bretch, who retired from Union Pacific Railroad has been a serious train collector since 1973 and is the owner of many vintage trains dating from the 1930's to 1960's. “This is a mammoth effort to put together all of the displays,” said Bretch. “I could not do it without a legion of volunteers who helped build and will set up the displays in the next few weeks,” he added.

Train exhibits will be available beginning on Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 – 2:00 (with the exception of the Van Buren Public Library). All locations will be open beginning Nov. 30 – Dec. 2 and Dec. 7 – Dec. 9, with Saturday times being from 11:00 -2:00 and evenings on Thurs.-Sat. being 5 to 7 p.m. The full experience will include:

- Van Buren Trolley stops for each location
- Performance of dance and drama led by choreographer Eric Williams and Alma Public Schools drama teacher Marti Salisbury on the Trolley and the Train Depot
- Free passport for each family to receive passport stamps after each train exhibit. Participants will register their completed passports for a chance to win a train set.
- Volunteer “Train Conductors” will be available to help guide guests with a hands-on experience of operating the train and giving basic history of each display
- Volunteers from Operation Life Saver will pass out material and discuss train safety
- Free wooden token for guest as they complete their passport book. The tokens were made by Derrald Porter.

Passports may be picked from each display location and at the Welcome Center at The Depot.

## **Pajama Train and more Christmas events in downtown Van Buren**

**The Van Buren Pajama Train** sponsored by the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad will run on Friday, November 24, November 25-26 and December 4-6. Hot chocolate, cookies and a visit from Santa will be featured on each trip. Each trip departs from the Train Depot.

### **Pajama Train Schedule**

November 24 - 6:30 pm

November 25 - 11 am, 1, 3, 5 pm

November 26 - 11 am, 2:30, 4 pm

December 4 - 9, 11 am, 5, 7 pm

December 5 & 6 - 9, 11 am, 5, 7 pm

For more information visit [www.amrailroad.com](http://www.amrailroad.com) or call Arkansas-Missouri Railroad at 1-800-687-8600 or 1-479-725-4017.

### **Other downtown events:**

Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Heritage Church Outreach in the downtown area

Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Lighting of the Christmas Tree at the Courthouse and Living Windows of downtown Merchants

Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Parade on Downtown Main Street

**Old Town Van Buren Hometown Holiday's Holiday Market in the Park** will take place November 25-26 in Freedom Park featuring handmade products. For times and vendor information call 479-922-6862.

### **Van Buren Public Library Activities**

Several activities will be held at the Van Buren Public Library:

- Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> – Lego Train building
- Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> – Making Train Ornaments
- Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Breakfast with Santa
- Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> – Making Christmas Cards
- Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Cookies
- Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> – Polar Express Movie @ 2:00 pm

Call 479-474-6045 or visit [www.crawfordcountylib.org](http://www.crawfordcountylib.org) for more information on library events.

Free trolley rides will be available for all events. For more information, visit [www.vanburen.org](http://www.vanburen.org).