

Newsletter



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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By Paul von Goertz, KRHCC Board Member

DEPOT DEPUT DELIGHTS JULEBYEN FESTIVAL-GOERS!

The hard work put in by depot volunteer rebuilders paid off handsomely with the many complements heard from those who saw the restored depot for the first time over Julebyen weekend.

Hats off to volunteer general contractor, Larry Ronning, who installed one of the remaining windows the day before Julebyen in harmony with all those buzzing around decorating the depot and setting up displays.

The depot seemed to know it was the debutant of the ball by providing shelter, heat and light and great photo opps with holiday lighting, fresh snow, trains, characters from Norwegian mythology and many, many happy children.

A total of 282 rode the Julebyen Express from Duluth over the weekend – a more than 25% increase over last year – and we hope part of the reason was to see the restored depot. Five Troll Trains to Troll Canyon (Sucker River gorge) carried 827, mostly young families, in search of trolls. And they did see them!

The Troll Train is only made possible through the generosity of the North Shore Scenic Railroad, which does not charge Julebyen for the four hours their locomotive is in KR and available to Julebyen. Julebyen keeps the revenue from Troll Train tickets and the NSSR from the Duluth round trip Express ticket sales.

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Note: Revenue from the Troll Train helps keep Julebyen, a non-profit, free to the public. Julebyen neither has nor seeks a commercial sponsor, but rather relies on more than 200 volunteers to bring this family-centered Christmas celebration to thousands across the upper Midwest.

Inside the depot on the east half were hundreds of “Vintage Christmas Treasures” consisting of vintage tree and home decorations. The remainder of the depot was devoted to ticket sales and providing children with clues for numerous treasure hunts that took place on KRHCC grounds.

Our normally reserved “Historical Artifact Czar,” Todd Lindahl, displayed some railroad memorabilia in the bump-out and found himself the center of attention for all who wanted to know more about the depot and North Shore railroad history. Todd even wore a festive red shirt!

With this newsletter is a sampling of photos that depict some of the Depot Debut.

DEPOT TEAMS WITH JULEBYEN FOR GREAT MEDIA COVERAGE

We thought the Depot Debut in conjunction with this year’s Julebyen was newsworthy and we are happy the local media apparently did, too. Print media coverage included the DULUTH NEWS TRIBUNE in two feature stories, the LAKE COUNTY NEWS CHRONICLE, Minneapolis STAR TRIBUNE, the NSSR’S JUNCTION magazine, television stations WDIO and Fox 21 (two features), and two public radio stations.

We are thankful for the media support given Julebyen, as Julebyen purchases very little advertising to keep overhead costs low and Julebyen free to the public.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

Your KRHCC board of directors will be meeting shortly after the first of the year to begin planning the balance of work for Phase I (completion of the depot exterior and freight depot) and how we will complete Phase II in 2020 (depot interior and shelter(s) for CRUSADER and picnickers).

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Coming in January 2020 newsletter - a review of KRHCC 2019 accomplishments and KRHCC board goals for 2020.

The NSSR's showpiece locomotive, the Hustle Muscle complete with Christmas wreath on its front, rolls into Knife River from Duluth Saturday morning.
(Photo Todd Lindahl)



Paul von Goertz, KRHCC board member (also your newsletter editor) and dressed as 1900s KR Depot Agent, is first to descent train from Duluth and announces to all present they are witnessing history as this is the first passenger train since 1956 to arrive at a functioning KR depot.
(Photo Ed Lee)

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Passengers head for the depot.

(Photo Todd Lindahl)

More than 200 people were waiting to take the first of five Troll Trains to Troll Canyon that were offered over the weekend. A total of 827 people rode the Troll Train.
(Photo Ed Lee)



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Depot at Troll Village seen from drone Saturday, Dec. 7. (Photo David Schauer)

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It's all about children! Julebyen's focus is on families and so keeps Troll Train prices very reasonable. Adults are \$10, children \$4 and 3 and under ride free. The train to Troll Canyon and return takes about 40 minutes - and riders do see trolls!



What will be the depot waiting room, served as sales room for "Vintage Christmas Treasures." Ticket seller's cage is roughed in at left. It was made according to Todd Lindahl's specs by Dale Burton from Burton Forge & Gallery in Larsmont and donated to the KRHCC. Thank you Dale!
(Photo Paul von Goertz)

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Judging by this customer's full handbag and smile, there really were "vintage Christmas treasures" at the depot! (Photo Paul von Goertz)



Todd Lindahl and some of his railroad artifacts displayed in the depot bump-out and elsewhere. (Photo Todd Lindahl)

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(Photo Paul von Goertz)

Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: info@krhcc.org if you have family or friends you feel may enjoy receiving it, please send their email addresses to same address above.