

Ideas for 2025 Polar Express Season:

2024 Season Hiccups:

- **Reflectix removal from Hawker boxes – Fixed.** With the reapplied Reflectix Hot Cocoa maintained heat for the hour-long duration.
- **Foam Insert:** After 2 nights, the hawker box foam inserts began to absorb the hot Cocoa and began to have an odor. It also was very difficult to clean. This comes from the Cocoa room. They kindly sanitized them, but it takes at least a 24-hour period to ensure the odor is minimal.

Suggestion: New Hawker boxes are nice but if not applicable asking the welding class at one of the high schools to weld replacement grids with the hawker box dimensions would be a suitable solution. The ability to get 30 cups into each box is a critical factor due to time and space constraints.

- **Hawker box distribution:** – Hawker turnaround time was hindered between runs due to Cocoa having to be redistributed to Hawker boxes upon arrival. We only have 4 extra Hawkers that are not used on runs.

Solution: With the current amount of time the Hawker box situation is not critical but to save time and allow cast and crew appropriate time to use restrooms and hydrate also to create less stress on the Cocoa room; I recommend at least procuring enough Hawker boxes for 2 runs. Doing this allows us to reload the train quickly and maintain schedule time without overwhelming Cast and crew and the Cocoa room. It would also allow for sanitization of Hawkers before the next distribution.

- **Heating Pads in Ardel Mae:** - The heating pads currently there are older and still functioning to an extent. It would be ideal to replace them with better working ones and ones that have covers for cleaning capabilities. Several times the pads turned off, not allowing the cups to warm. **Solution:** Replace them with larger and more reliable ones.
- **Soaking powder for vomit:** Unfortunately, due to the nature of the experience at times we have guests who vomited.

Solution: There is a powder on the market that should this happen can be applied and soak up the vomit. It is available on Amazon ranging from 20\$ to 168\$ depending on what you are looking for. This would kill odors, be quick clean up and provide a level of exceeding sanitation.

- **Barf Bags:** This goes along with the powder. Having to designate small barf bags in a central location in all cars would greatly increase the crew's capability to handle any vomiting. If there was a way to find a location in all seats that is not permanent it would help with the immediate response of any passengers ill.

- **Gloves for Clean Up:** Due to the nature of working with the public germs are at an all time high. Gloves were offered this season and some cast utilized them.
Solution: Next season at least a box of gloves in each car to insure if there are incidents with vomit and for general cleaning; staff can clean and hinder any illness that would affect the staff member.
- **Sticky floors and cocoa spills:** While offering cocoa is ideal and is a major component in the experience; children unfortunately have accidents. Due to this the floors of the train cars often do become sticky even by the second run.
Solution: Each car or at least 2 cars be outfitted with a Swiffer Mop to get quick spills handled and prevent floor stick and unsanitary conditions.
- **Seating in V&T Coach 2 Polar Coach 1:** The seats in the Mound House are awesome but where a slight hiccup due to the way parties like to be sat. We often had dissatisfied guests who did not like how the seats were arranged. This was due to my fault and not properly looking at the layout and how the seats needed to be arranged. Tom's crew was very kind and redid the seats for us. If there is a chance to get a seating arrangement that allows us to seat odd and even parties without single riders it would be best. That or provide a seating arrangement list to the ticket booth so they can put people where they see fit. See attached sheet of proposed seating.
- **Seating for V&T Conductors:** In cars 1 and 2 and was well as in the Ardel Mae there is seating available. There are 32 available seats in Ardel Mae. Our brakeman and conductors are an integral part of the running of these trains. I propose each car has at least 1 reserved seat for the brakeman inside. As for the brakeman his seat needs to be towards the front to ensure he can perform his duties watching the rails for hazards. This is especially critical during the inclement weather runs. These conductors are here for our safety and these runs are long. To ensure their health is maintained keeping them out of harsh weather as much as possible is necessary.
- **Storage Restrictions:** Due to the nature of the production and it being performed in what is a "theatre in the round" format there is no "backstage space" to mask the props and supplies from the passengers as they board. It would help create surprise and some magic if these things were hidden from the passengers until they came out. If possible with the help of the V&T staff we would like to create tear down racks made from PVC to allow us to create shelf space on the train cars if needed. Certain cars do not need this and need minimal masking. In the Jersey Lil' and in the Carson City car these are especially critical as the magic is spoiled seeing items placed for accessibility.
Solution: PVC fitted racks to allow storage capabilities with decorative ability.

- **Decorations:** The cars were nicely decorated but could be easily expanded on with minimal time needed. A simple rack system that allows us to suspend ornaments cut to fit the luggage racks may create a more magical atmosphere. The system is minimal and can be easily stored for years to come and utilized in any format for future trains not just Polar Express.
- **"NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED" Signage:** While a person who is drunk will continue to be drunk and not read a sign. Having posted signs in the depot stating that alcohol is not permitted on the ride would be greatly helpful. Most of the cast we acquire is under the age of 18. These young adults are coached to understand this may happen, but to have signage posted to be able to reference would be greatly helpful for us and the V&T Staff to ensure that we can enforce this policy.
- **"NO STROLLER" signage and website info:** Multiple passengers love bringing their lap babies. There is no storage space available for these strollers. If possible it being added to ticketing online and a visible sign with a designated area for stroller parking would be appreciated. This would allow us to give an option for passengers to leave the stroller at the depot and maintain safety standards.
- **Depot Decorations:** While the depot did have its grandeur this experience has its own magic. The blank walls of the depot create a wonderful canvas to use. Some ideas include: a street scene if the homes for the setting of the book, famous homes in Carson City, Virginia City, Reno, Lake Tahoe, and such to make it a more personal experience. Keep it known as a Depot with snowflake projections onto the walls and make the scene as an outdoor setting.
- **Boarding Scene on Platform:** With inclement weather being possible if there was a way to take the scene and the train backdrop to the platform. With inclement weather the backdrop would need to be enclosed in some respects to insure the comfort and health of the actors and equipment.
- **Additional Speaker in loading area:** The loading area has only one speaker located in the southwest corner. While it is good once the room is filled it is very difficult for the back wall to hear anything being said due to the minimal range of the speaker.
- **Loading zone arrangement:** The loading zone was quickly worked out and the conductors were amazing. The loading arrangements worked well. The signage and visibility of what line went where was an issue. If possible running the wire containing the seating lines from the north to the south would be greatly appreciated. Having the line directly above the lines indicating the towards the front would be ideal.
- **Masking for the Cocoa room:** If possible to have a small pipe and drape system installed in front of the door to the cocoa room would be appreciated. Small children are often curious and unfortunately this creates a hazard when loading between trains. This also would uphold a level of magic to the cocoa being presented on the train.
- **Masking for the shelves on Coach car 1:** If possible to use tension rods or some sort of masking on the shelving in Car 1 hiding the Cocoa and props would be awesome.