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CHICAGO AREA SANTAS BID FAREWELL TO THE POLAR EXPRESS

Chicago, IL - January 9th, 2014 <http://www.santainchicago.com>

Santas and Mrs. Clauses from around Illinois will be meeting at Blackberry Farm, 100 S. Barnes Road, Aurora, Illinois at 10 am on Saturday, January 11th to say good-bye to the farm's and other Chicago area Polar Express events.

The Blackberry Farm Polar Express has been one of Northern Illinois' most popular holiday offerings. This past season they had multiple trips on six days, with hundreds of children enjoying these excursions.

Polar Express train trips have been a Chicagoland institution almost since the motion picture first came out in 2004. The film is based on the 1985 classic by Chris Van Allsburg, about a young boy's odyssey to the North Pole on a train adventure.

In 2013 Warner Brothers legal department—without advance warning—decided to shut down all Chicago area park districts and others who were offering Polar Express train trips that weren't paying Warner a licensing fee.

Warner Brothers learned about the Polar Express trips because of an area website www.santainchicago.com, which lists seventy-four Santa train events. Most of the organizations included used the name "Polar Express" in their offerings.

Because it was too late for the park districts and other organizations to pull their advertising and promotional activities for these events, Warner allowed the Polar Express trips to operate one last time in 2013.

To use the 'Polar Express' name in the future they will have to pay a licensing fee of up to 30 percent of their gross revenue to Rail Events, Inc. who are working in cooperation with Warner Bros. The local organizations are for the most part, non-profit entities with limited budgets and as a result will no longer be able to offer Polar Express trips.

John Sullivan, a Chicago area Santa Claus whose website lists these events says, "this is a lose lose situation for everyone. The families and children lose some of the Chicago area's most popular Santa events, the park districts lose and of course Warner Brothers is the biggest loser of all".

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