

Updates • News • Events • Information

Canadian Pacific Holiday Train Returns to Hermon for 2023!

Article by: Shelby Reynolds, Photos by: Scott Perkins





On Tuesday, November 21st at 11:30 AM, the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train will pull into Coldbrook Road crossing for a 30-minute stop to celebrate the Holiday season with music and entertainment at Coldbrook Road crossing. The lighted train will stop, put a door to the entertainment car down and provide music for the crowd gathered. This free concert is an opportunity for the region to donate food items or to make a cash donation to a local food bank to celebrate the season of giving while enjoying the train event.

While the business park will remain open some delays may be experienced because of the crowd. Coldbrook Road will be closed between Dave's Way and Autocar Lane with Coldbrook Road traffic detouring through the business park. Event goers are encouraged to be at Coldbrook Park by 10:30a.m. to enjoy the show and holiday festivities!

Town of Hermon
Joshua Berry, Town Manager
333 Billings Road, Hermon, ME 04401
Tel: 207-848-1010 Fax: 207-848-3316
berryj@hermonmaine.gov
www.hermonmaine.gov

If you have a news story or article for publication in the next edition of

The Hermon Connection, please send it to:

<u>ouellettel@hermonmaine.gov</u>

Deadline for submissions: November 20, 2023

From The Clerk's Office

Submitted by: Kristen Cushman



Important Dates

November 23 & 24, 2023 - Closed on Thanksgiving and day after Thanksgiving

December 25, 2023- Closed for Christmas

December 31, 2023 - 2024 Dog registration due date

January 1, 2024 - Closed for New Year's Day

February 1, 2024 - \$25.00 per dog late fee starts

HOLIDAY CONTEST

We're hosting our 2nd annual community holiday lighting contest from December 2, 2023 through December 25, 2023!

The community lighting event invites Hermon residents and businesses to go all out and decorate with festive lights! Starting December 2nd, we encourage all families and friends to drive around local communities to see light displays on Hermon homes, businesses, and neighborhoods.

Each participant will receive a lawn sign with a number on it and members of the community will be invited to drive around and view each entry. Next, community members will be able to vote for their favorite light display. The registered participant with the most community votes will win a cash prize!

THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26.

In order to prepare the map, we are accepting registrations until Friday, 11/24.

Maps will be available on 12/2 www.hermonrec.com Hermon Rec Facebook page o be distributed at the Jingle & Mingle even

Maps will also be distributed at the Jingle & Mingle event on 12/2! Copies will also be available at Danforth's and Hermon Town Office

SPONSORSHIPS

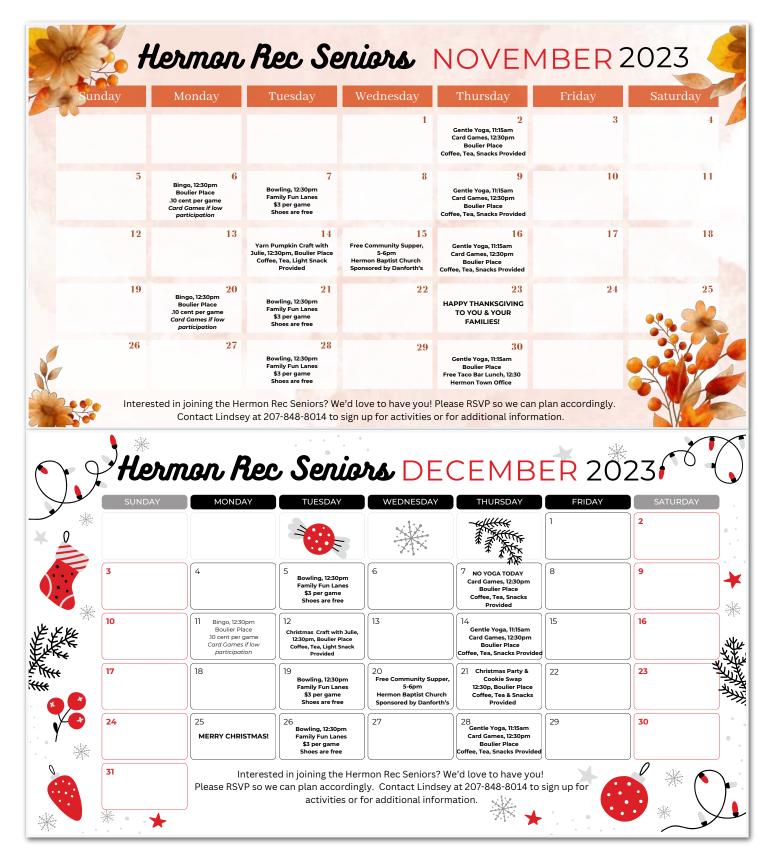
We are looking for local businesses for donations to allow us to purchase lawn signs and give a cash prize for the Holiday Lights Competition! Sponsors will have their business logos featured on the Holiday Lights Map, our website and Facebook page. Donations are tax-deductible.



Fun Activities for Hermon Seniors

Article by: Lindsey Ouellette

Join our vibrant senior community at Hermon Recreation and take part in a range of weekly events, including bowling, board games, crafts, and luncheons. Our focus is on encouraging socialization and fostering a sense of belonging within the community. We're always looking for new and exciting activities to add to our calendar, so come and join us today!



Rooting for Change: 4th Grade Teacher Brings the 'ReTree US' Project to Patricia A. Duran Elementary School

Article & Photos by: Courtney Williams



In the ever-evolving landscape of education, dedicated teachers like Sarah Collins are continually seeking innovative ways to engage and inspire their students. Sarah, 2023 Milken Educator Award winner and fourth-grade science teacher at Patricia A. Duran Elementary School recently took on an extraordinary endeavor-the "ReTreeUS" project. This project, an initiative led by Richard Hodges out of New Hampshire, aims to instill a deep appreciation for the environment and the importance of conservation in the hearts and minds of young students. This project not only demonstrates Sarah's commitment to fostering a love for nature but also underscores the power of experiential learning. Sarah recognized that planting trees could be a tangible way to connect students with the environment and teach them about the crucial role trees play in our ecosystem. With

this in mind, she applied for the grant and won!

With the help of the "ReTree US" this idea was turned into a reality for Sarah and her fourth grade students. On Wednesday, September 27th, the fourth graders at Patricia A. Duran School planted nine pear trees and 3 apple trees on school grounds. The impact of the "ReTree US" project was twofold. Not only did it deepen the students' understanding of the environment, but it also fostered a sense of responsibility for Hermon's graduating Class of 2032. The act of planting a tree symbolized their commitment to the planet and their determination to be stewards of nature. It emphasized that small actions, like planting a tree, can have a lasting and positive impact on the planet. Melissa Davis, Principal of the





Patricia A. Duran School was excited to host the "ReTreeUS" project. "I am so thankful for the ReTreeUs organization. Having an orchard planted at our school was not only a learning experience at the time, but is a learning experience that we can continue to have as we watch the trees grow and eventually produce fruit."

As Sarah Collins continues to nurture the young minds of Patricia A. Duran Elementary School, her "RetreeUS" project stands as a shining example of the transformative power of education. It demonstrates that a single teacher's dedication can spark a love for the environment and a sense of responsibility in the next generation, making them more environmentally conscious citizens of the world. When asked about what it was like to have Sarah as a teacher, one of her current students said, "Mrs. Collins makes learning fun by singing silly songs and letting us go outside to learn. We got to go outside to sample soil and plant trees." When asked about the "ReTreeUS" project, the student added, "It's actually pretty fun to plant trees and not complicated at all. Digging was my favorite part. I can't wait to try the different kinds of apples that we planted together." This project will not only leave a lasting impact on her students but also serve as a model for future generations of educators who strive to make a difference in the lives of their students and the health of our planet.

JROTC 4th Annual Biking Trip

Article & Photos by: Aubrey Searway



September 27th, and September 28th the Hawk Battalion went on our 4th annual mountain biking trip to Grindstone, Maine to the Penobscot river trails at Maine Outdoor Education Program (MOEP). Our biking trip was facilitated by Maine outdoor guides. This trip involved a fun bus ride up, lunch at the heating lodge, endless miles, and naps on the way home.

Depending on what ability group you were in; the fast, medium and slow group, you rode around 7-10 miles. Their facility was very nice, with pristine, groomed trails. An added bonus

was there was great foliage because the leaves were changing color this time of year. We were also able to overlook Mount Katahdin as we ate our lunch.

We had some cadets who did not know how to ride a bike, but by the end of the day with the help of the outdoor guides they were fully trained. The others who already knew how to ride, got a safety briefing, bikes, and hit the trails riding by colored trees, and the East Branch Penobscot river, hills, and lots of wildlife. The facility practices a carry in, carry out policy, so the trails and river are always kept clean and beautiful.



Our cadets got to learn more about each other on this trip. It was early in the year so a lot of people that went did not know each other. This was especially important for first year cadets. By the end of the trip nearly everyone knew each other. We learned how to work together and get along, which is a key component to JROTC and being a member of any team. Every year our JROTC cadets learn so much from this trip. For our first year cadets, this year was their first year doing the trip, and they had nothing but nice things to say about mountain biking and getting to know other cadets. "It was a fun bonding experience with our platoons," is what first year cadet Gage Martin said. Another first year cadet, Isabel Trogdon said, "We liked how we all got the bikes and how nice the trails were. They were nice and clean, easy to bike even with the hills. They were nicely groomed and not muddy. And I'd like to do this trip again", Second Lieutenant Jacob Hulbert who is also a member of the Hawk Battalion Command and Staff commented "It was a great way to bond with the newer cadets." Battalion Executive officer Jackson McNally said "It was an opportunity to establish relationships with the new cadets along with strengthening the bonds between cadets I already knew." That was just a few responses from the 70 plus cadets that went on the trip. Nearly everyone I spoke to after the trip loved it and was ready to go again.

We also use the Maine Outdoor Education Program for our kayaking trip, and this winter we are planning on conducting a cross country skiing trip. This was certainly an amazing trip to kick off our 2023-24 Hawk battalion school year.

The Duran School and Families Support Kids at Christmas

Article by: Melissa Davis (Ed.D)

The Patricia A. Duran School staff and the PTA are teaming together again to support elementary school families in need this holiday season. As we have done in the past, we will collect gifts for children in our school community who are in need. In the past we've used a board with paper mittens at the entrance of the school. To make the process easier, we've converted to an online platform. The link will be posted on the school's web page and Facebook page at the beginning of November. Community members are welcome to sign-up to sponsor a child.

We ask that gifts are brought or delivered to the elementary school unwrapped. We provide families with wrapping paper and materials so they are able to wrap their child's gifts. All gifts are due back to the elementary school by Monday December 11th. This will ensure that we are able to organize and prepare the gifts for distribution during the week of December 18th. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please send all donations to Mrs. Davis at the elementary school office in an envelope marked "Helping Hands." We will make sure your donation goes directly toward the purchase of student gifts. Thank you all for your generosity and making this holiday season special for all of our students!

Want to contribute to the Hermon Connection?

Have something you want to share with the community? If you have an item of interest pertaining to the Town of Hermon we want to hear about it! Submitting an article in the Hermon Connection is a good way for residents and organizations to share stories of interest with the community. If you would like to submit an article, please email it to Lindsey Ouellette at ouellettel@hermonmaine.gov. In order for Hermon residents and/or organizations to submit articles to be published in the Connection, the following criteria must be met:

- 1. The person submitting the article must be a resident of the Town of Hermon.
- 2. The organization submitting the article must be location within Hermon's geographic boundaries.
- 3. The organization has a lawful purpose which does not pose a threat to public order, to the safety of the public, or to the safety of any individual.
- 4. The organization does not have as its primary purpose marketing products of services or making a profit.

Please be aware that any articles and notices submitted by community members and community organizations may not contain offensive language, slander, advocate violence or unlawful activity, or pose a threat to public order or to persons or their reputation. When determining whether or not to submit an article, please be aware the deadlines for submission are approximately the 20th of February, April, June, August, October and December.

Once you have submitted your article, Town staff will be in contact with you to let you know if the article you submitted will be published. We look forward to hearing from you!

November - December Recreation Programs



NOV 20 & 22



DEC 2



DEC 2 - 25 REG. BY 11/24



DEC 26 - 29



DEC 9 REG. BY 11/26



DEC 16



11/1 -12/1



TBA

Tax Assessing Department Update

Article by: Rylee Cushman

Tax Commitment

The Assessing department has finalized its annual tax commitment October 13th, and you should be receiving your tax bills shortly. The mil rate for this year is set at \$11.75. If you would like your tax amount prior to receiving your bill, please contact the Assessing department.

Quarterly Reviews

The Assessing Department is committed to maintaining its real estate information as up to date and accurate as possible. To do so, we will be conducting field reviews of approximately 25% of the town this fall and upcoming summer to ensure that our assessing information is still accurate and up to date. This review will not require anything from home or business owners, we appreciate your help keeping the town's assessment records accurate.

Business Owners

It's almost that time of the year again for Personal Property declarations. If you would like a copy of last year's itemized assessment list, please make your request via email.

State of Maine law (MRSA 36 Section 708) provides for a tax on business personal property. The tax is assessed annually in accordance with the requirements set forth in Title 36 of the Maine Revised Statutes, sections 601 & 706A. Before making an assessment, the assessor may give seasonable notice, in writing, to all persons liable to taxation or qualifying for exemption pursuant to subchapter 4-C in the municipality to furnish to the assessor a true and perfect list of all the property the taxpayer possessed on the first day of April of the same year and may at the time of the notice or thereafter require the taxpayer to answer in writing all proper inquiries as to the nature, situation and value of the taxpayer's property liable to be taxed in the State or subject to exemption pursuant to subchapter 4-C.

IMPORTANT: If you are in business on April 1, 2024, you are liable for the entire year's Personal Property Tax Bill. All businesses of record will be issued tax bills unless the Assessor's Office is notified <u>IN WRITING</u> to the contrary. If this declaration form is not completed and returned, an estimated additional new value will be added to your assessment. Also, under Maine Law, taxpayers that do not comply with filing may lose any right to appeal their assessment.

TAX REFUND: The State of Maine has a Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (**BETR**) Program. This allows for personal property taxes paid on qualified personal property to be refunded to the businesses.

TAX EXEMPTIONS: The State of Maine has a Business Equipment Tax Exemption (**BETE**) Program. This allows for a personal property tax exemption on qualified personal property. Please contact our office for assistance with this.

We look forward to working with you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Assessing department, please contact us at:

Phone: 848-1010 option #1

Email: Assessor@HermonMaine.Gov



Comprehensive Plan Committee Update - November 2023

Hermon's Comprehensive Plan is nearing completion at the committee level. The draft will be available for public review in December of 2023 thirty days before a public hearing and vote on January 18, 2024. Town Council acceptance after the public hearing in January will send the plan to the State of Maine for final approval.

To accomplish its mission, the *Hermon Comprehensive Plan Committee* engaged Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) to facilitate the planning process. The committee consisted of town council members, municipal staff, volunteers from various town standing committees, and other business and community volunteer leaders to understand their perspectives regarding Hermon's strengths, weaknesses, and vision for the future.

Comprehensive plans are the legal underpinning of zoning ordinances—intended to assure that the power of zoning is not used arbitrarily, unfairly, or without attention to identified and documented needs after considering current data and conditions. State of Maine requirements for any approved comprehensive plan are described in the Maine Growth Management Act Title 30-A.

This 2023 Comprehensive Plan is the fundamental plan for the Town of Hermon, providing specific guidance to town officials, administrators, and volunteer committees as they govern, advise and regulate activities that affect the town's citizens. The Comprehensive Plan Committee's mission is: "To review, revise, and update the 2010 Comprehensive Plan so as to guide the actions and public policies of the citizens of Hermon and their representatives into the future."

Hermon has an exemplary track record in the development of town plans. Comprehensive planning began in 1964 with the town's first master plan, with a subsequent plan drafted in 1995. A volunteer committee produced the town's 1995 Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Maine Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, which mandated that all Maine cities and towns prepare a plan to manage future growth. Comprehensive land use ordinances were adopted in 2000 based on the 1995 Comprehensive Plan with updates in 2013 and 2015. Given the rapid growth in town over the last decade, Hermon's 2023 Comprehensive Plan is a specific guide addressing community issues with clear goals, policies, recommendations, and a concise road map for implementation. The plan ensures that Hermon complies with the state's current *Growth Management Act*.

For more information about the planning process, recorded meeting videos and committee member list, please visit the Town of Hermon Comprehensive website at https://www.hermonmaine.gov/:

https://www.hermonmaine.gov/town-government/town-committees/comprehensive-plan-committee/



Legislature Reconvenes in January, but Committee and Constituent Work Continues

The Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature reconvenes in January 2024. Between now and then, our citizen legislature is focused on constituent work and committee meetings. Since our break in July, legislators have had committee meetings on a number of important topics.

These include:

- Government Oversight Committee review of Maine's Child protection laws and department oversight.
- Consideration of legislation to enhance online privacy protections.
- A Maine Department of Environmental Protection update to lawmakers on efforts to create rules around Maine's first-in-nation poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) reporting law.
- An Education Department report on Maine's School Funding Formula.

I serve on the Marine Resources and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) Committees. We have been considering issues relating to Maine aquaculture and Sunday hunting respectively. The IFW Committee has also been receiving feedback on the expansion of our youth deer hunting law from Saturday to Friday and Saturday.

Those are just a few of the topics that legislators have considered in advance of the Second Regular Session which begins in January. That session will take up several hundred bills that were held-over from last session. Fewer new bills will be considered since the second session is limited, by statute, to consideration of "emergency" bills. In my experience, that can be a subjective criteria that depends on who is in charge of the legislature.

I am interested in your thoughts on these and any other topics of concern to you. Please feel free to contact me at Jim.Thorne@legislature.maine.gov or call 207 287-1440 to share them, or if I can be of assistance with state matters.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you in the Maine House. I love hearing your thoughts and concerns, and appreciate your input!

Sincerely, Rep. Jim Thorne







FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

Drop-off Location:

Hermon Town Office 333 Billings Road Hermon, ME 04401

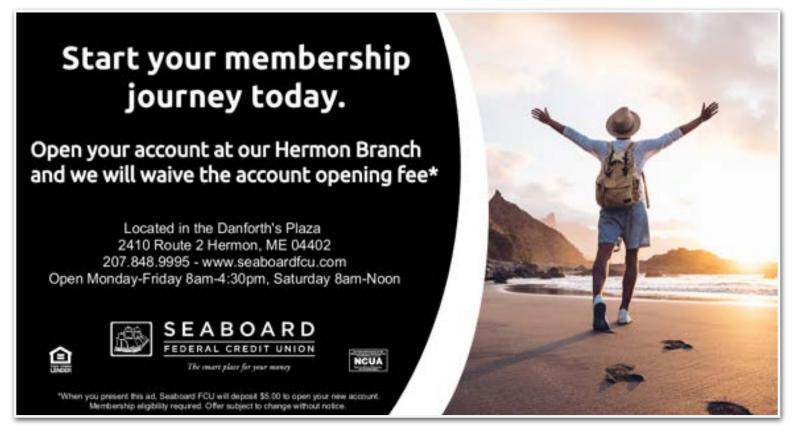
We are looking for donations of new or gently used holiday decorations, ornaments, or Dollar Tree gift cards for local children in our community

For more information call: 207-848-8014 or visit www.hermonrec.com

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