

RAILBIKES ON THE SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE RAILROAD

Railbikes are an important piece of efforts to return the beloved excursion train experience to the Heritage Valley. Railbikes provide a fun, safe, and active way to experience the Heritage Valley's beauty, history, and recreation opportunities for individuals and families.

Operated by Mendocino Railway, the Sunburst Railbikes operate much the same way that an excursion train does, on a set schedule, mounted on railroad tracks, with a guide in the front and rear of each tour. The Sunburst Railbikes operate on a pre-scheduled basis, currently Thursdays – Sundays, with two 3-hour (round-trip) tours departing at 9am and 1pm, with sunset tours departing at 5pm on summer weekends. The tours depart from Santa Paula Depot and travel eastward towards Fillmore, with a turn-around point west of Sespe Creek. The tours stop at Prancer's Farm, where guests have an opportunity to purchase local produce and visit seasonal attractions.

Railbikes operate and follow the same rules as other trains, using specially designed radio communication to control railroad crossing signals, and sounding horns at crossings, per Federal rules. The Santa Paula Branch Line railroad crossing signals were specifically upgraded by Sierra Northern Railway to work with the railbikes' operational system. Railbikes clear through crossings on State Route-126 and other public and private crossings quickly and safely by following established rules and protocols. Guides are trained and qualified railroad personnel who have also completed training in first aid and have successfully passed a drug test. Operations and Emergency Plans are in place, and Guides carry a well-equipped first aid kit. Railbikes have been successfully operated using this system in Mendocino and Yolo Counties since 2018.



Tour participants receive a safety briefing at the beginning of the tour that includes staying on the railbikes and not leaving the railroad right-of-way. Guests are not permitted to enter neighboring properties. Restrooms are available at the start of the tour, at the turn-around point, and at the pre-planned stop location at Prancer's Farm. For neighboring landowners with concerns regarding potential liability if railbike guests were to enter their property, existing California law includes protections for landowners and facility operators from legal claims by recreational users. California Civil Code § 846 specifically indemnifies private landowners against liability for recreational users entering their property.

Approval for railbike service was included in the Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement, approved by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) on December 16, 2021, between Sierra Northern Railway and VCTC, which owns the Santa Paula Branch Line Railroad.

For more information on Sunburst Railbikes, please visit <https://www.sunbursttrain.com> or call (805) 844-5075. In the event of an emergency, please dial 911 and/or contact Sierra Northern Railway at (888) 864-6995.