

# Sun Tan Special returns Saturday

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**SANTA CRUZ** — The Sun Tan Special is coming back!

The train that brought tourists to Santa Cruz 34 years ago will again come rumbling and whistling this weekend.

The "Return of the Sun Tan Special" will carry with it a trainload of nostalgia when it pulls into the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk Saturday.

The event will feature two trains. The five-car Amtrak Superliner is scheduled to depart at 9 a.m. from San Jose's Diridon Station, transporting 200 dignitaries and sponsors to the Boardwalk around noon. It will make ceremonial whistle stops at the Watsonville Junction in Pajaro and Aptos Village before arriving in Santa Cruz.

Meanwhile, the eight-car CalTrain "Sun Tan Special" is expected to pull out of Diridon Station at 9:30 a.m., bringing 1,000 passengers and sponsors to Santa Cruz. It will travel its historic route through Gilroy and Watsonville and along Monterey Bay, a route last used during a special Fourth of July event in 1962.

"There are so many memories associated with the Sun Tan Special. I'm looking forward to seeing the train pull up in front of the Boardwalk once again," said former Sun Tan Special passenger Ted Whiting III, of the Seaside Co., which owns the Boardwalk.

But not everyone is happy that the Boardwalk is exploring the possibility of bringing passenger service back. A group of people who live along the Southern Pacific tracks have voiced opposition to reviving service.

The Right-of-Way Alternatives In Local Suburbs, or RAILS, has said the trains will bring noise and pollution to those who live along the tracks. The group plans to protest the Sun Tan Special Saturday.

A rail fair also is set for Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the colonnade at the Boardwalk. It will feature a variety of displays, including model railroad transportation alternatives.

The Amtrak Superliner will have three bilevel coaches, a din-

## Preview

- **WHAT:** Return of Sun Tan Special
- **WHERE:** Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, 400 Beach St., Santa Cruz
- **WHEN:** Saturday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **COST:** Free
- **INFORMATION:** 423-5590

ing and a sightseer lounge-car, all open for public tours. On Sunday, tours will be from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The train is scheduled to depart at 4 p.m. for the return trip to San Jose for those passengers who paid \$136 for the overnight stay at the Dream Inn.

Tickets for the Return of the Sun Tan Special were sold out shortly after they went on sale for \$36. A complimentary all-day, unlimited ride pass for the Boardwalk and a boxed dinner on the return trip to San Jose were included in the ticket price. By early April, a waiting list for the round-trip train tickets was stopped after growing to more than 200 names.

Of the 800 public tickets sold for CalTrain, more than 250 were purchased by Santa Cruz County residents, she said.

The Special has a long, colorful history.

In 1927, Southern Pacific extended the "Picnic Line" between Los Gatos and Santa Cruz to start in San Jose and dubbed it the Sun Tan Special. The Special operated every Sunday from Memorial Day to the end of September, stopping at Henry Cowell Big Trees in Felton before heading to the Boardwalk. After a day on the beach, passengers would return — a round-trip ticket costing \$2.

Heavy rains in 1939 and 1940 washed out the tracks in the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Special was re-routed through Watsonville.

The special rail event will raise money for Friends of the Long Marine Lab in support of the marine mammal rescue program, which works to save dolphins and other cetaceans.