

Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad is on track for fun

All aboard the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad in Boone for a memorable adventure riding historic rail cars.

The tourist railroad, located west of Ames, offers a variety of rides, including the Basic Excursion and Dinner, Dessert and Picnic Trains. The railroad operates from Memorial Day through October.

The Basic Excursion can accommodate groups up to 600 passengers. The train travels to the coal-mining town of Fraser and back. Guests can enjoy first class, coach, caboose or an open-air car for the 90-minute ride.

“As the train travels through the Des Moines River Valley, it crosses the 156-foot-tall Bass Point Creek High Bridge, the tallest single-track inter-urban railroad bridge in the United States,” said Alan Schroeder, president of the board and acting general manager for the line. “Passengers are



Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad, Boone

PHOTO: BOONE & SCENIC VALLEY RAILROAD

impressed with the beautiful scenery. They reminisce about their parents and grandparents riding the train and it gives them a sense of nostalgia.”

Dining cars for lunch or dinner can be chartered for groups of up to 88 people. The cars offer a two-and-a-half-hour ride. In the golden age of rail travel,

these two cars were used on Union Pacific’s famous *City Of Los Angeles* and *City of San Francisco* trains, both of which served Boone on their way between Chicago and the West Coast.

As an added attraction, groups can visit the James H. Andrew Railroad Museum & History Center to learn more about the glory days of railroads in Iowa. The museum features exhibits, videos and a multimedia library. Admission is included with purchase of most train tickets.

Check the online calendar of special events for Pumpkin and Santa Express Trains, and Day Out with Thomas. Motorcoach parking is available. Reservations are recommended. 📞

Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad & Museum
800-626-0319
bsvrr.com

Collecting mania comes into focus at Palmer Family Residence

The Palmer College of Chiropractic may seem an unusual destination for a group — unless it’s a group of practitioners of the alternative medicine founded by Daniel David (D.D.) Palmer in the late 19th century. But the Davenport campus is home to a mansion-turned-museum that offers a fascinating look at the life of Palmer’s son Bartlett Joshua (B.J.) and his wife Mabel Heath Palmer.

B.J., also a chiropractor who advanced his father’s work, traveled extensively around the world, especially to Asia, with his wife and son David from 1921 to 1923. They bought whatever captured their attention, from ivory chess sets to Buddhas, vases, rugs, textiles, African art and wicker furniture made by prisoners in the Philippines.

“It was an era when people collected oddities,” said Alana Callender, who oversees the residence.

“We appeal to a wide variety of people,



Dr. B.J. Palmer’s office, Palmer Family Residence, Davenport

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PALMER FAMILY RESIDENCE

including men that are obviously dragged to another historic home,” she laughed.

The hour-long, guided tour of the mansion’s first floor takes in the 140-foot-long enclosed porch Palmer added to three sides of their Second Empire-style home to accommodate thousands of souvenirs. What’s on display is just a portion of the Palmers’ treasures; family members inherited some items, and many, including a mummy from Egypt, were donated to the local Putnam museum.

Tour groups of 15 persons maximum start at 10-minute intervals and may be arranged at almost any time, depending on activities at the college (the home is closed in December). There are some steps and no ramps.

The tour includes the showing of an Aeolian pipe organ and the space where Palmer broadcasted a radio program on his station, WOC, the second commercial radio station in the United States. Vibrant home decor colors reflect Palmer’s love of the circus.

“It is delightfully bizarre,” Callender said.

Motorcoaches may drop groups at the loading dock on the north side of 8th Street, between Brady and Main streets. The home is located on Brady Street at 8th. 📞

Palmer Family Residence
563-884-5714
palmer.edu