



TRAINS News Wire, July 18, 2006

Details finalized for fall excursions behind Chinese steam

The Friends of the 261 and other sponsoring organizations have finalized details for the operation of two Chinese 2-10-2 locomotives out of the Quad Cities this September.

As reported on TRAINS News Wire last week, the excursion trips are being operated in conjunction with "RiverWay 2006," the celebration marking the 150th Anniversary of the country's first railroad bridge across the Mississippi River. Sponsoring groups are The Friends of the 261, the Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, and City of Rock Island, Illinois, in cooperation with the Iowa Interstate Railroad and the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad.

The trips will use Chinese class QJ 2-10-2s No. 6988 and No. 7081 owned by Railroad Development Corporation, owners of the Iowa Interstate Railroad. Since RDC hopes to resell the locomotives, this might be the only time the pair will operate together in passenger excursion service. The schedule is as follows:

Thursday Sept. 14: An all-first-class dinner train with ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony at 6:00 p.m. Train departs Rock Island, Ill., at 6:30 p.m., with dinner and fireworks at the Iowa Interstate's Government Bridge, arriving back in Rock Island at 9:30 p.m.

Friday Sept. 15: Depart Rock Island at 9 a.m. for a trip west on the Iowa Interstate to Iowa City and Homestead, Iowa. A lunch stop will be made in Iowa City and the train will be turned on the wye at Homestead. Return to Rock Island at 4 p.m.

Saturday Sept. 16: Depart Rock Island at 9 a.m. for a trip east on the Iowa Interstate to Bureau Jct., Ill., with intermediate stops at Silvis, Geneseo and Atkinson, Ill. Train arrives at Bureau Jct. at noon, turns on the wye, and returns to Rock Island at 5 p.m.

Sunday Sept. 17: Train and riverboat excursion from Rock Island south to Muscatine, Iowa, via Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, returning via boat, with a side trip from Muscatine to Fruitland, Iowa. Ticket for this excursion may be obtained by contacting the Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau at www.visitquadcities.com or 800-747-7800.

The excursions will include open window and air-conditioned coaches, an open door baggage car, a full-length "Super Dome" car and Skytop observation car *Cedar Rapids*. Tickets can be purchased online at www.261.com or www.visitquadcities.com. Phone orders will be taken from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at 651-765-9812.