



NEWS RELEASE - For immediate release

After more than forty years of celebrating Boone's railroad heritage the weekend following Labor Day, the Boone County Chamber of Commerce and the Pufferbilly Days™ Steering Committee have announced that the festival will move to a new weekend beginning in 2021.

The Steering Committee recently made the decision to move the festival to the weekend of August 6th through the 8th with an eye toward improving festival attendance, allow for greater volunteer participation, and lessening the burden on local law enforcement among their top reasons.

The Committee stated that over the years a number of factors have been impacting the festival and have created challenges within the city of Boone and across central Iowa. These include competition with large-scale events such as the Farm Progress Show, IMCA SuperNationals and the Iowa/Iowa State football game which have maximized hotel inventory leaving many without a place to stay during these events, forced patrons to choose between attending events, and lessened the overall financial impact of each event on the local economy. Chamber Executive Director Kurt Phillips also cited the start of the school year as another challenge to a successful celebration. "Once the school year gets underway we lose an opportunity to engage the younger kids in many of our activities, lose the teenage crowd, their parents and grandparents to competing school events like Friday night football, and the college crowd as they leave to return back to campus." Phillips added that the Committee hopes that the new dates will help with attracting novel parade entries and special musical entertainment. "We know for a fact that there are several groups that lose much of their talent and typically do not perform after September 1st. And for years we used to have the Boone Municipal Band play on Thursday nights, but as many of the band members are college-aged there aren't enough here by the time the festival rolls around, so it just hasn't worked out in recent years."

Beyond the change in dates the Pufferbilly Days™ Steering Committee does not anticipate any other major revisions. "You can still plan on great entertainment on Friday and Saturday night, the 5K/10K run, mud volleyball, classic car show, the craft fair on Story Street and of course the parade on Saturday", Phillips said. Much of what was in place in preparation for the 2020 festival that was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic will carry over to the 2021 celebration. Phillips said, "We're still working on a few key pieces but much of what we had planned for is in the cue and ready for the early August dates." He added that festival updates will be added to the www.PufferbillyDays.com website as they are solidified. "We know any change is hard. Many people plan vacations back to Boone and families and high school classes plan their reunions and get-togethers around the Pufferbilly Days™ weekend. That's one of the reasons we wanted to get this message out sooner rather than later, so that they can adjust any plans for the coming year."

ABOUT PUFFERBILLY DAYS™

Pufferbilly Days™ started in 1977 as a small retail promotion organized by members of the Chamber of Commerce, who tied its name back to Boone's long-standing railroad heritage. (The name Pufferbilly comes from the little steam engines that were used in coal-mines. Originally named Billy Goats, the engines then became known as Puffing Billy's, and finally Pufferbilly's.) The festival annually draws more than 15,000 attendees and was named Iowa's Outstanding Event in 2019 by the Iowa Department of Tourism.