

FAMILY-OWNED BED AND BREAKFAST OPENING SOON IN HISTORIC CHESTERTON FREIGHT RAIL STATION

Cars may be king of America's transportation system, but for many, they can't compete with the historic allure of trains.

Richard Riley has always known which he preferred. This spring, when Riley's Railhouse opens in the nearly century-old freight depot in downtown Chesterton, Ind., he'll finally be able to share his love for the railroad with anyone looking for a unique bed-and-breakfast experience.

The restored building, built in 1914 after the town's original 1852 depot was destroyed by fire, will offer guests the perfect spot to indulge their love of trains. It sits next to one of the nation's major freight arteries (80 trains pass by daily) and is less than 500 feet from Chesterton's old passenger rail station, which now houses the town's chamber of commerce.

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**Richard Riley, Owner
Riley's Railhouse**

"Some people love the sheer force and size of these trains," he says. "Some people love railroad equipment. Some know all the history, others love lanterns, timetables, or spend their lives photographing trains."

Riley, who bought the historic structure in 2006 and carefully rehabilitated



it with his family, believes the new business will attract rail lovers from around the country to the town's historic downtown. Enthusiasts already come to the region to watch trains; the new business will be the perfect place for them to stay.

"Towns struggle to have vibrant downtowns," says Riley, a lawyer whose G-scale model trains run throughout his Orland Park, Ill., home's garden. "This will help revitalize the area. It's good to bring as wide a variety of activities and businesses there to attract people."

Riley's Railhouse will likely open in May, he says, with the depot's two original lofts converted into two bedrooms, and a G-scale model railroad circulating throughout the bed and breakfast's common space. Eventually, he plans to convert a caboose and box cars into as many

as four more bedrooms.

But he's not just banking on rail aficionados to flock to the track-side bed and breakfast.

"For every man who likes trains," he acknowledges, "there's a spouse who doesn't like trains, and a child who doesn't like trains." Thankfully, due north of downtown Chesterton lies the natural beauty of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, with its beaches, hiking and off-season cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Throw in Chesterton's collection of antique and arts shops, and you've got a full menu of options for an adventurous family.

After more than three years, Riley is ready to finish up the final interior touches and open his doors when spring arrives. Exterior improvements are

already completed; he invites anyone curious to check out the depot in the coming months.

"It's been a labor of love. Now that we're so close to the end, we're anxious to be done," Riley says. "I don't want to make a museum, although that's a temptation. The railroad is an active living, breathing, evolving business. If people come away with a sense of the importance of trains and this station, I'll be happy."

FOR MORE INFO:
(OPENING EARLY MAY)

Riley's Railhouse
123 4th St. | Chesterton, IN