

THE KINZUA BRIDGE SPAN . . . NOW A SKYWALK ATTRACTION

Tuesday October 16, 2012

\$129

No. Olmsted, Middleburg Hts, Independence, Beachwood, Boston Hts, As Applicable

When it was built in 1882, the Kinzua Viaduct was one of the tallest bridges in the world. Located in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it was 201 feet tall and 2,052 feet long . . . before its collapse in 2003. Upon its completion it was billed as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" but holding this record for only two years. In 1900 the original structure was dismantled and rebuilt out of steel to better be able to handle the heavier trains that had evolved. It could then handle the 511-ton "Big Boy" steam locomotives that pulled the trains but only one could cross the bridge at a time. It remained in service until 1959 and was eventually sold to the state. Restoration began in 2002 but, before it was completed, the bridge was struck by a tornado causing a large section of it to collapse.



The viaduct and its collapse was featured on the History Channel's "Life After People" as an example of how corrosion and high winds would eventually lead to the collapse of any steel structure. After an investment of about \$8 million, the bridge was re-opened in 2011 as the Kinzua Sky Walk and Visitor Center. The remains of the fallen towers are still visible and the Sky Walk has a pedestrian walkway with an observation deck with a glass floor bottom at the end of the bridge affording a view of the bridge and valley below it with all its fall colors.

Our luncheon will be dining at one of the most popular restaurants in the area, just east of the Allegany National Forest. In addition to great food, the building retains amazing history. In 1900, Andrew Carnegie, the philanthropist from Pittsburgh, donated the funding to construct this beautiful building, built from one of three plans that he had approved for all of his libraries worldwide. After a new library was constructed, the building converted into the beautiful restaurant that will be greeting you. It is registered in the National Register of Historic Sites and sits in Bradford's Historic District.

Our third stop, also in Bradford, will be at the Zippo / Case Museum. Zippo, known for lighters over the years, are highlighted at this "trip into the past". One unique exhibit is a 7-ft by 11-ft American Flag comprised of 3,393 red, white and blue lighters. You'll learn of Zippo and see the first Zippo lighter as well as see a 40-ft lighter with a pulsating flame. There will also be interesting stories of W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery Company, acclaimed to be the manufacturer of some of the World's finest knives. You've been asking for interesting new tours . . . and this is another such experience.