Bisbee home tour steeped in history

By Joe Callen
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Bisbee is only about 200 miles from Phoenix, but a walk along the hills streets of this southern Arizona town looks like a scene from 100 years ago. But here, people — especially the seniors living in retirement communities — have given the town a rebirth.

A tour guide for the Bisbee Historic Home Tour, which begins on Saturday, said that the homes are a mix of Victorian homes and older mansions that are original miners’ homes.

“People are really excited about the tour,” said Kathy Hiner of the Bisbee Visitor Center. “We’re going to be showing houses that go back to 1895, so this is a chance to see some of the great history we have. Some of these homes date back to the 1800s, and we’re really proud of the fact that we’re working to preserve these old structures.”

Bisbee was one of the most successful mining towns in Arizona, producing nearly 1 million tons of copper ore before World War II. Today, the population of about 20,000 people lives in a town that is home to many buildings and structures that have been preserved.

One of the houses on the tour is the former home of the late author and illustrator, James Tiptree Jr. The house, which dates back to the 19th century, is now owned by the Bisbee Historical Society.

One of the oldest homes on the tour was a one-room miner’s cabin, perched on a hill and accessible only by a 70-step staircase. But owner Bob Klein said it’s worth the walk. He and his partner, Jeff Trujillo, restored the 1865 cabin into a Doublejack Guesthouse, which they rent to tourists.

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