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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bunnies, Bees and Bears, oh my!

Special-shaped balloons make the Balloon Race fun for the whole family

(RENO, Nev.)- The Great Reno Balloon Race, which takes place each year at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, is known for its vivacious special-shape balloons. This year, spectators will find some of their favorites from last year as well as some new characters at the event, Sept. 5, 6 and 7.

Each morning the **American Bald Eagle** balloon will rise to the national anthem, thanks to the continued sponsorship of the Wilbur D. May Foundation. Wells Fargo will bring **Lilly and Joey**, the little love bees in the sky, back for another year. Lilly and Joey will lead the Hare and Hound Competition, kissing their way to the finish line.

Another familiar balloon is **Smokey Bear** who will return to the Balloon Race thanks to the Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators. He is a reminder to us all that “only you can prevent forest fires”. Thanks to Energizer, the **Energizer Bunny** balloon seems to keep going and going! It is quite a sight to see with ears as tall as the president’s faces on Mount Rushmore and a body that rises 15 feet taller than the Statue of Liberty.

A new addition to the Balloon Race this year is **Wally the Clown Fish**, the friendliest fish in the sky. At a whopping 100 feet long and weight of 950 pounds, this gentle giant will give tethered rides to support the Children’s Cabinet, also thanks to the May Foundation.

“We love to see the sparkling eyes and bright smiles of children as they watch the special shapes inflate and come to life,” Dixie May, founder of the Dixie May Foundation, said.

The May Foundation is also helping **Lucy the Ladybug** float her way around the Truckee Meadows for the Children’s Cabinet. Lucy sits atop a giant sunflower, measuring 70 feet long and 90 feet tall, and she can lift 1,800 pounds.

For a complete schedule of events and for more information on this year’s event visit www.renoballoon.com or call (775) 826-1181.

Thanks to our sponsors, The Great Reno Balloon Race is free to our community and its visitors.

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Thanks to the continued support of generous sponsors, The Great Reno Balloon Race continues as a free event for its 27th year. This year's major sponsors include: Wells Fargo Bank, the May Foundation, Silver Legacy Resort Casino, Peppermill Hotel Casino, Harrah's Reno, Reno.com, Jack in the Box, Great Basin Internet Services, Communications Installation Services Inc. (C.I.S.) of Reno, KRNV News 4, News Talk 780 KOH, Bonanza Casino, City of Reno, Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, Shell Oil and Curves of Northern Nevada. With a special thanks to our Founding Sponsors: Circus Circus, Club Cal Neva, Fitzgerald's, IGT, Silver Legacy Resort Casino, Peppermill Hotel Casino, Sands Regency Casino Hotel, Muckel Anderson, Nancy Gilbert, Attorney at Law and the University of Nevada, Reno.

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