

## HISTORY THE GREAT RENO BALLOON RACE

**ABOUT:** The Great Reno Balloon Race (GRBR) is the world's largest free hot-air ballooning event. With more than 100 balloons and 100,000+ in attendees each year, the event is a permanent fixture in Reno, Nevada's September skyline. GRBR is a non-profit organization funded by sponsorship and tax-deductible donations.

**THE FIRST RACE:** Twenty balloons participated in the first race in 1982. The idea was to create an event to keep northern Nevada's visitors in the area the weekend between the State Fair and the Reno Air Races.

**DAWN PATROL DEBUTS:** In 1978, Federal Aviation officials approved strict flying regulations and standards that all pilots must use in predawn flight. These regulations include flying within an hour of sunrise along with special navigation lights that are located under the basket. In the late 80s the Balloon Race Board of Trustees patented **Dawn Patrol** and in 1990 began one of the community's most popular traditions. Balloon rallies around the country use GRBR as a model in orchestrating their pre-dawn events.

## **NOTABLE ADDITIONS OVER THE YEARS:**

- **1998:** GRBR adds the **Glow Show** to Saturday and Sunday, offering spectators an attraction as they await Dawn Patrol.
- **1999:** GRBR partners with Washoe County School District to present the **E.L. Cord Tissue Paper Balloon Launch**. This same year, **Balloon Blackjack** debuted.
- **2001:** GRBR celebrates its **20th Anniversary** with the Birthday Cake balloon.
- **2002:** Good Morning America appears at GRBR for live cut-ins of Dawn Patrol during its Friday morning show.
- **2003:** GRBR hits record attendance with over **140,000** spectators over the three-day event. Also, **Serena's Song**, the only wheelchair accessible balloon in the U.S., offers free tethered rides for people with disabilities.
- **2006:** The **25th Anniversary's** Saturday crowd reaches record of 75,000 attendees, the largest to date.
- **2007: CNN** attends the event and GRBR also receives worldwide coverage in *Prestige Hong Kong, Every Day with Rachel Ray* and *The History Channel Magazine*. Additionally, National Championship Air Race becomes a sponsor and performs the first **T-6 formation fly over** during the National Anthem. This year also marks GRBR's highest attendance with **180,000 spectators** over the three-day event.
- 2008: In partnership with Reno Media Group, GRBR hosts the World's Largest Pajama Party.
- **2009:** "Rolling Pilot," Michael Glen, the first paraplegic hot-air balloon pilot in the world, flies in the Balloon Race. For the first time, **Brian Jones** pilots a hot-air replica of his helium balloon, the **Orbiter 3** at the Balloon Race. The Orbiter 3 was the first balloon to fly around the world nonstop.
- **2011:** GRBR celebrates its **30th Anniversary**. The 86-foot tall **Darth Vader** balloon travels from Belgium to make its first light at GRBR.
- **2012:** GRBR introduces the Cloud 9 VIP Club, giving spectators a convenient and luxurious space to watch the race.
- **2013:** GRBR introduces a Friday Glow Show featuring the largest Glow Show in history. Additionally, GRBR launches a new web site and mobile app.