



AT A GLANCE – HISTORY OF THE GREAT RENO BALLOON RACE

LOCATION: Rancho San Rafael Regional Park

ADMISSION: Free, thanks to sponsorship support

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE: 150,000

WEBSITE: www.renoballoon.com

DONATIONS: To make a tax-deductible donation visit www.renoballoon.com

ABOUT: The Great Reno Balloon Race is a non-profit organization

The First Balloon Race was held in 1982: Twenty balloons participated. The idea was to create an event that would keep visitors in town the weekend between the State Fair and the Reno Air Races.

Dawn Patrol is a patented Great Reno Balloon Race Event: 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 80's 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 The Great Reno Balloon Race as a model in orchestrating their pre-dawn events.

Attractions added over the Past 20 years:

1998: Addition of the **Glow Show**, which was added to offer spectators an attraction as they wait for Dawn Patrol on Saturday and Sunday. It also helps to showcase our Major sponsors (on Saturday) and Special Shape balloon visitors (on Sunday). The Glow Show begins at 5 a.m.

1999: Washoe County school children get involved with the event in the **E.L. Cord Tissue Paper Balloon Launch**. This event gives school children a chance to positively interact with their community. One of the major goals of this project is to make sure that no funding comes out of the pocket of schools or teachers. The thrill of winning big goes airborne as the Biggest Little City in the World hosts the biggest card game, **Balloon Blackjack**. The casino-style action gives pilots a chance to throw two extra markers at huge face cards placed on the launch field. Those pilots hitting the highest hand most accurately win prizes.

2001: The Great Reno Balloon Race celebrated its **20th Anniversary** with the Birthday Cake balloon.

2002: **ABC's Good Morning America** appeared at The Great Reno Balloon Race for live cut-ins of Dawn Patrol during their Friday morning show.

2003: The Great Reno Balloon Race hit record attendance with over **140,000 spectators** attending the three-day event. Also, Serena's Song, the only wheelchair accessible balloon in the United States, offered free tethered rides for wheelchair usage and people with disabilities throughout the weekend.

2006: The **25th Anniversary** Saturday crowd reached a record 75,000 attendees, the largest to date.

2007: **CNN** attended the event and The Great Reno Balloon Race also got coverage in worldwide media including *Prestige Hong Kong*, *Every Day with Rachel Ray* and *The History Channel Magazine*. National Championship Air Race becomes a sponsor and performs a T-6 formation fly over during the singing of the National Anthem. 2007 marked the Balloon Race's highest attendance at the three-day event with **180,000 spectators**.

2008: The Great Reno Balloon Race hosted the **World's Largest Pajama Party** which encouraged spectators to attend in pajamas with their best (and worst) bed-head.

2009: **"Rolling Pilot,"** Michael Glen, the first paraplegic hot-air balloon pilot in the world, flew in the Balloon Race. For the first time, Brian Jones flew 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: The world's largest FREE hot-air ballooning event celebrates its 30th anniversary. The 86-foot tall Darth Vader balloon travels from Belgium to make its first flight at The Great Reno Balloon Race.

2012: The Great Reno Balloon Race introduced the Cloud 9 VIP Club, giving spectators a convenient and luxurious experience.

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