

W I L D H O R S E R E S O R T C A S I N O

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For Immediate Release

Wildhorse Resort & Casino To Inaugurate Sunset Flights At Annual Balloon Bash

Pendleton, OR - Pendleton, Oregon—Wildhorse Resort & Casino will inaugurate sunset flights at the 9th annual Wildhorse Balloon Bash, featuring 35 hot-air balloons Oct. 21-23. There will be a total of five flights this year, with morning flights each day at 7 a.m. and sunset flights Friday and Saturday at 5 p.m. As in the past, the public is invited to witness the launches, which will take off from the fields adjacent to the resort.

Each flight will include a pilot competition with cash prizes, but unlike the past two years, when teams of women pilots were pitted against their male counterparts, each competition will simply call for individual competition including all pilots. Wildhorse will not hold a Saturday Night Glow, a feature of the last eight years' events.

As always, Wildhorse invites volunteers to join balloon crews, offering novices a chance to participate in balloon launches and retrievals while learning the rudiments of this quiet form of flight. To volunteer call 541-966-1540 or email dave.franklin@wildhorseresort.com.

"We have been having very bad luck with the weather and our Night Glow event the past few years," said Michelle Liberty, Wildhorse marketing director. "So we decided to add the late afternoon flights when the winds are most likely to die down and give everyone a couple more chances to watch the balloons go up. It will be especially appreciated by those people who have a hard time getting up for the 7 a.m. launches!"

Many of the pilots return each year, coming from throughout the western U.S. Of the 35 pilots invited this year, 31 have previously flown in the Bash. Because the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, the world's largest hot-air balloon event, runs earlier in October, several of the pilots fly there, then head for Pendleton.

Anyone can crew a balloon and Wildhorse encourages families to make it a fun event for the entire family. Children under 18 must be accompanied a responsible adult. No experience is needed; training will be provided on the spot.

Wildhorse is providing \$8,750 in prize money, divided evenly among the five competitions, with the top 8 places taking prizes from \$600 for 1st to \$25 for 8th. The contests require pilots to drop weighted streamers on a large X on the fields below, located in a triangulated course. Points accrue for hitting closest to the target. To "steer" the balloons, pilots must raise and lower their balloons to different altitudes in search of winds headed toward their targets. In a second "hare and hounds" version, a "hare" balloon launches and pilots, the "hounds", must follow it to find their target.

An annual feature of the event is the Wildhorse Spud Shoot on Saturday at 1 p.m., a competition among tinkerers who assemble a variety of homemade cannons capable of firing a potato across a large field to hit a target. Wildhorse will award prizes for accuracy and best costumed spud cannon.

For more information visit the Balloon Bash website of Lighter Than Air America, a Boise balloon event firm that produces the Wildhorse Balloon Bash, at www.balloonshootout.com/bash/index.html.