

HIGH DESERT SWAP MEET AND CAR SHOW

Hundreds of classic, antique cars roll in

BY NICK ROSENBERGER
Redmond Spokesman

Despite a brown and smoky sky slowly creeping over Redmond, smiles, laughs and excitement flooded the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center on Saturday as the Oregon High Desert Swap Meet and Car Show rolled into town for its 38th year.

With more than 300 participants bringing their old, classic and antique cars and wares from around the state and beyond, the event hosted by the Central Oregon Car Club is a feast of car and collector culture.

"It's a fun event and I think it's been a great thing for the Central Oregon area," said Butch Ramsey, one of the co-presidents of the Central Oregon Car Club. "There's a lot of camaraderie."

The 80-year-old Ramsey said he's been interested in cars since he was 16 and brought one of his own cars to the event that was made in a blacksmith shop in 1904 or 1905.

"Just a fun thing more than anything," he said. "There's a lot of neat cars."

Ramsey wasn't kidding. From 1915 Model T Fords to a shiny 1966 Marathon Model Checker Taxi to hotrods, the free event drew in crowds of curious and passionate car enthusiasts.

"It's just fun," said David Lowe, a 77-year-old attendee from La Pine who brought two Chryslers to sell.

Lowe has loved Chryslers for decades and said his whole family had one at one point. Back in the early 90's, they'd clean their cars and cruise around the neighborhood — all five of them booming by as people craned their heads to get a better look.

"They just keep going," Lowe said, "why would I not like them?"

According to Ramsey, the car swap has always been very suc-

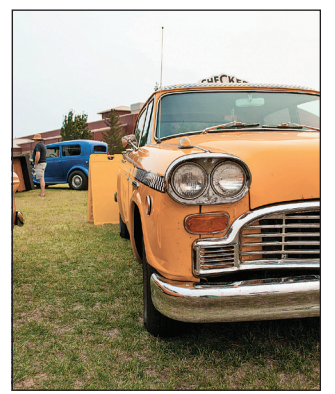


A Chevrolet Chevelle station wagon drives past the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center's dairy barn at the High Desert Swap Meet and Car Show on Sept. 10 in Redmond.

Nick Rosenberger/Spokesman



LEFT: Denny Bonn of Bend stands behind his 1927 Nash 4-door hotrod. CENTER: The interior of a classic Ford sits exposed at the High Desert Swap Meet and Car Show. RIGHT: A 1966 Marathon Model Checker Taxi cab sits at the High Desert Swap Meet and Car Show.



Nick Rosenberger/Spokesman

cessful since it began in 1983. Before the first event, there were car clubs all Central Oregon that had their own swaps and meets. However, they were small and disjointed until someone began to gauge people's interest in hosting one big event.

The first event saw a little over 100 participants and it has only continued to grow since then, Ramsey said. He wants to

see it hit 500 participants in the future.

But, it wasn't just cars on display at the fairgrounds.

"There's a real gamut of things out there," Ramsey said. "We've had tractors and RVs and a (homemade) helicopter one year."

"We just don't draw the line on what goes in this show," he said.

From old Mustangs, Thunderbirds and Oldsmobiles to ancient, standalone engines purring along, there was a sea of options to grab one's attention.

Collectible car and motorcycle magazines such as Hot Rod and Cycle World still encased in their yellowing plastic sleeves were splayed across tables while piles of rusted Americana stacked in rows sat next to bas-

kets of machine and car parts.

Neal Furlong, a vendor who drove from his home in Springfield, said he's been going to car shows and swaps for about 40 years and bringing the things he finds at garage sales — mostly Tonka Toys and wagons for this event — to the events.

He got his start, he said, after going to a big car swap in Portland and realizing people were

selling things he'd collected.

"I started selling my stuff also," Furlong said, "and I was just amazed that people wanted it."

The car swap and meet will also help fund scholarships for the Central Oregon Community College's automotive program.

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