




16th Annual

SANDHILLS OPEN ROAD CHALLENGE

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“A Home Away From Home”

Veteran SORC Driver Has the Best of Both Worlds

By Janet Larreau

This week 144 racers, their navigators, and support people, will converge on Arnold for the 16th Annual Sandhills Open Road Challenge. They will fill up area motels, camp out, or stay with Arnold residents who open up their homes. One veteran driver, R.T. Green, of California, will be staying in his newly-built, home away from home. The story of how he eventually came to the decision to purchase property and build his own lodging in Arnold started back in 2003, but his love for cars started way back when...

Green grew up in Southern California in the 60's. His family spent a lot of time at the beach, so the car culture and surf culture influenced him a lot. Hot rodding was part his life, as was cruising the famous Van Nuys Boulevard. There would be hundreds of cars. Then there was Bob's Big Boy hamburgers and carhops, and hanging out with the older guys in the neighborhood while they worked on their cars. Later, he moved to Northern California to attend San Jose State University. It took Green longer than four years to finish, with some time spent with the United States Marine Corps reserves.

After college, he went to work for a local police department and remained in that line of work until he retired in 2003. During this time, he continued building and restoring all dif-



After years of camping out in the race trailer during the SORC, Californian R.T. Green and his shark grey Corvette Z06/Z07, will enjoy the comforts of home in Green's newly-built shop on West Jefferson Avenue. (Kendra Veirs photo)

ferent types of cars from VWs to Shelbys. He also continued driving in several different formats, all on race tracks.

"I found out about SORC in a very interesting way. It is a little fuzzy and here is why," said Green. "I started a conversation with another 'blue drink' drinker. This turned out to be Dave Carpenter, long-time ORR and owner of the #36 M&M NASCAR. So for you who know Dave, there was no loss of conversation. We became fast friends, and he invited me to come to a race and learn to navigate. I soon learned that in the Unlimited Division, that 'navigate' is a loose term for 'hang on for your life.' It was so loud and noisy, all you could do was point. A stop watch was useless; you could not read it because

you could not hang on to it. We raced all over Nevada and Texas, and then SORC."

In about 2007 or 2008, Green started driving his own car in the SORC, mostly in the 115 mph class, and all have been Corvettes. He has placed several times, with and without navigators. He finished best overall in the inaugural Loop2Loop in 2012, second in the 115 class with local friend Lindy Dailey as the navigator, and first with his son-in-law in 2014.

"SORC has a very different feel to it than the other races," he said. "Everyone was so friendly and willing to lend a hand with anything. As I started meeting the folks around town, I soon realized just how special this place was. Down to earth, friendly, their

word is their bond, hard working, honest. Quite different than I was used to in California. I think this was when I really thought about spending more time here. I've been coming back ever since. Now several times a year, not just for the race."

Green's first few years in Arnold were spent camping out in the race trailer. In 2013, he started looking for a house to buy in Arnold. He said he was looking to get away from California. He was told about some lots that were possibly available, and he ended up with one on West Jefferson.

"I wanted a simple shop where I could also stay for an extended time. A place for my car and fun stuff, with a place to sleep and shower," he said.

"It came together with the help of all local folks, and I could not be happier. The first thing I did before moving any of my stuff in was to put up my flag pole. The village has welcomed me with open arms. I love it, and look forward to spending a lot more time here making it my home."

Green currently drives a 2015 Corvette Z06/Z07, #444, ordered by Sid Harchelroad. He traveled to the Corvette Factory and Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky, to pick it up.

"It was a great experience. I drove it off of the floor directly to the Corvette Motorsport Park across the street for a few laps. I then drove it home to California via Arnold and Imperial. It was a great trip," he said. "It is a great car, and I love it. It's shark grey with a light grey interior and all the 'goodies.' When I'm not at the races, I get stopped and asked about the car. I have to schedule extra time because guys want to see and talk about it."

"I have told several folks when I come to SORC it's to see all my friends... Oh, and by the way, there just happens to be a race, also. It's a 1,444 mile one-way trip, but worth every mile, and I trailer my car to save on those miles. SORC has a great road to run. It's very challenging. The Mile Shoot-Out adds another great event. With the addition of the Loop2Loop, it's a full week of fun. I want to thank all the folks who make this race happen. The thousands of hours of work. I'm proud to know all of you. It's a great place to live!"

Green has two adult daughters, Laurie and Kristen, who are married to what he describes as "wonderful guys," Drew and Brandon, who navigated for Green in 2014. They, his four grandchildren and his mom Shirley, all live within 90 minutes of each other near Pleasanton, California.

Fire Department Takes Special Training

Area fire departments prepared for this week's Sandhills Open Road Challenge at a one-hour training held on July 21. Some 50 volunteer fire fighters from the towns of Arnold, Callaway, Broken Bow, Ansley, Sargent, Dunning, Halsey, Thedford and Brewster took part in the training put on by the Arnold department in cooperation with FYR Tech out of Gothenburg.

Arnold Fire Chief Eric Nelson said it was brought to their attention that some of the race cars will be burning E85 ethanol fuel. In the event that one of those cars wreck, fire departments needed to learn the proper fire extinguishers to use.

Using a steel 48x48 pan, several types of fuels, including regular pump gas, E10 gasoline with 10 percent ethanol, E85 with 85 percent ethanol, pure alcohol and 110 percent high octane, were burned to see the difference in characteristics. Different fire extinguishers were tested, most notably a regular ABC fire extinguisher, which will not put out ethanol-based fires, and Purple K for petroleum-based fires.

He said small passenger cars can also be burning these same fuels.

"You never know what is coming down the road," he said.



As other volunteer firefighters watch, a fire fighter tests an extinguisher on one of several fuels that were burned at a training held in July at Arnold. The training was held to prepare area fire fighters on how to extinguish fires from the different types of fuels that cars will use in the Sandhills Open Road Challenge. In the event of a wreck, the departments are now well prepared. (Tammy Weinman photo)