

Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation Fact Sheet for Friends Groups—Car Shows

People love to show off their classic cars, and a state park is the perfect setting for all that glistening chrome. The Friends of Keystone have been hosting a car show for a few years now and have been kind enough to share some pointers on the process.

Hosting a car show takes months of planning, so it's never too early to start gathering and organizing sponsors, volunteers, and participants. First, determine your goal for the event—is it to attract visitors? Build relationships? Raise revenue? Second determine your budget—how much money do you have on hand to host the event and/or where might you find monetary assistance?

Donations and Sponsors

The Friends of Keystone host a Chinese auction at their annual car shows; if holding an auction or a raffle is something you'd like to do, please be sure to follow the *PPFF Policy for Fundraising Raffles*.

In order to collect items for auction, send out donation letters a few months before the event. You'd be surprised what interesting car-related items some people have laying around! And don't forget to send thank-you letters or post acknowledgments to all of those who donate.

To gather sponsors, reach out to local automotive repair shops or other car-related businesses in your community. Offer some sort of sponsorship benefit, such as an ad in the event program. Sometimes sponsors will give out items or trinkets that you can use to make goodie bags. Local car clubs are also a great resource to reach out to for contact information, advice, or even sponsorships. You may even gather a few more volunteers.



Flexing their muscles lakeside.
Photo: Friends of Keystone

Registration and Participation

Setting up pre-registration is crucial for a car show, so creating a registration form that participants can submit via email or USPS would be the easiest way to organize your participants. The form should include information such as:

- Participant name and contact information
- Make/Model/Year of Vehicle
- Special Features of Vehicle

To stay organized, create an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of entrants' contact and vehicle information. You can use this spreadsheet for reference in the planning of future car shows as well, as this will help contact past entrants to inform them of upcoming shows. On the day of the show, provide a car registration card for each entrant and an ID card for entrants to put in

the car window that highlights the vehicle's information. Be sure that the registration table on the day of the show is in plain sight and easy to locate to avoid confusion when participants arrive.

Trophies and Voting

The Friends of Keystone buy about 100 3"x4 "metallic dash plaques that go to the first 100 registered cars. This is something participants can mount on their dashboards to show their participation in the show, and they only cost about \$1/plaque to have made. For 1st, 2nd and 3rd place popular vote winners, you might provide trophies or awards plaques. Create a voting ballot with ID

numbers assigned to each registered car and allow people attending the show to vote on their favorites to find the winners.

Letting your attendees vote instead of just your friends group members is a great way to let everyone feel included and to keep the voting fair. Feel free to create fun categories (like cars from different eras, etc.) so more people have a chance to win prizes.

Promoting the Event

Advertising your event will be one of the MOST important things you'll need to do in planning your show. If the word doesn't get out, you won't have any cars to show, so be sure you choose the date well in advance. Posting flyers around your community, utilizing social media such as Facebook or Twitter, and posting your event on the park's and PPF's websites are all effective ways of promoting your car show. Check out other local car shows and ask if you can hand out flyers, or post flyers at car dealerships. Make an announcement on local public radio or in the newspaper as well. Sometimes newspapers may post non-profit events free of charge, so just ask! Also, be sure to double check that there aren't going to be any major community events going on at the same time as your car show, as that could affect attendance dramatically.

Here's two websites where you can also post your show:

- www.carcruises.com
- www.carshowfinder.org

Food and Entertainment

Food vendors, food trucks or just grilling up hot dogs and hamburgers are options, so it's really up to you to decide how you'd like to feed your guests. Contact local businesses and find out if they will cater. Music by a DJ or a live band adds to the atmosphere. Be sure to follow food safety guidelines and/or any guidelines required by your park/forest. If contracting for music, sample contracts are available at the PPF website.

Volunteers

Your volunteers will be your most valuable asset in a successful show, so delegating where they'll be helping out is very important. Have meetings to gather your volunteers and post flyers around the community.

Day of Show

On the day of the show, volunteers will be needed to assist



Remember, all the cool kids drive Chevys.
Photo: Friends of Keystone

with:

- Recruit an emcee from the group to make announcements and thank everyone for attending
- Car registration and ID cards (as noted above)
- Food preparation and sales (if not catered)
- Traffic control
- Trash and recycling receptacles
- A friends group booth
- Raffles or auction
- Photographer
- Prizes and voting

Organizing parking for attendees will be very important on the day of, so before people start arriving, set up a loop for easy in and easy out.

Here are some resources to help you with planning:

- <http://jalopnik.com/how-to-organize-a-car-show-472971908>
- <http://www.fundraiser.com/jun06/car.html>
- <http://www.wikihow.com/Host-a-Car-Show>

Friends Group Resources:

Friends of Keystone—724.339.1885

Reminders

- If you hold a raffle as a fundraiser, be sure to follow the *PPFF Policy for Fundraising Raffles* and to have your raffle permit in place before conducting the raffle.
- If you plan to have vendors on site selling their own goods, please be sure to obtain their sales tax identification numbers in accordance with the *Vendor List—Sales Tax ID Tracker*.