



THE 2020 WESTERN NATIONAL MEET

“Colorado Drive Five”

Alamosa, Colorado

September 20 –24, 2020

Hosted by the Hi-Country Regional
Group

“This is the one that you **will** remember”



Please specifically note the elevation of Alamosa is 7500’

Alamosa, Colorado (located well away from the big city noise, traffic, and the messy complexities of the front range --- Ft. Collins, Denver, and Colorado Springs) will be the headquarters city for the meet. Situated near the southern end of the San Luis Valley, which is a high (7500’) and semi-arid plain (but now an important irrigated farming area), it is surrounded by scenic mountains to the north, east, and west. Big city in services but small town in feel, Alamosa has all the amenities that you will need, expect, and enjoy, as well as much, much more. Located on the Rio Grande River and originally settled as a railroad community, it retains a lot of train flavor and activity, while also exuding a comfortable community feel. This will be small city America at its best. Naturally, the National Meet will have all the basics that you have come to expect from such a gathering: judging and the concourse, seminars, the President’s meeting, a swap meet, door prizes, “welcome-in” activities, a driving tour (which you definitely won’t want to miss), raffle prizes, as well as a banquet and awards festivities, not to mention serious meet and greet time. As you might expect, we will introduce our own “western flavor twist” to make things more interesting. So plan on bringing your boots, your best jeans, and your flashiest cowboy shirt — and maybe even your Stetson.

But there’s more --- specifically, all the great things that you will want to see, do, experience, and visit, either as part of the meet, or as part of a slightly extended visit. Seriously consider the possibility of spending some additional vacation time in the valley --- you will not regret it. Imagine being able to comfortably and enjoyably drive on the kind of lightly traveled roads your vintage vehicle was designed for, with the rhythm of the road singing to you from beneath your wheels. Imagine the hood stretching out in front of you, leading the way, and thru the windshield appear impossibly beautiful and scenic panoramic views to delight you. As noted, the 7500’ high San Luis Valley is surrounded by mountains --- The Sangre de Christo range (including five 14,000 ft. peaks) to the east, and the Cochetopa “hills” (the peaks here are only 13,000 ft. high), as well as the

Continental Divide, to the west. So, you might ask, what is there to see and do in our part of the world? Consider the following listing, which is just a brief outline of some of the things possible.

- In the immediate vicinity of Alamosa is the **Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway**. This is the “Ancient Road” followed by the intrepid Spanish explorers, when they first visited what is now Colorado, in the early 1500’s. And they definitely left their mark on the area. The Spanish were in this part of the country long before the Pilgrims splashed ashore at Plymouth in 1620. The “Road” (which is --- in part --- a small element of the driving tour we will be following on Thursday) goes north from Alamosa to Mosca, then east to the great sand dunes, south to Fort Garland, and San Luis, west to Manassa, and then south again to Antonito and eventually up and over Cumbres Pass. Lots of history here! Many interesting sites are along the road (a turquoise mine anyone?), including many historic Catholic churches, as well as the oldest parish (located near Antonito) in Colorado --- founded way before the U.S. was even a country. San Isadoro Church in Las Mesitas, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Conejos, All Saints Chapel (at the top of San Pedro Mesa) and the Stations of the Cross Shrine in San Luis are just some of the historic churches in the area. As you can readily discern, the long-standing Spanish influence is very strong in this area, which is part of the attractiveness. Plan to drive the Los Caminos Antiguos, either as part of the meet tour (but that is only a small part), independently, or perhaps both. Plan to stop often and absorb the history. You will not regret the time spent.
- A major attraction, which we plan to visit as part of the meet tour, is **Great Sand Dunes National Park**, located about 35 miles north and east from Alamosa. What --- you did not realize that Colorado is home to some very big and serious sand dunes? We are, and we have them! Imagine a massive dune field (about 40 square miles in size), ever changing and ever shifting when the wind blows, with the tallest dunes 750 ft. high. Visually impressive, especially with 14,000 ft. mountains in the background, and a small stream at the foot of the dunes, just to provide a bit of contrast. The Visitor’s Center and on duty Rangers explain how and why the dunes are here, and the information is very interesting. The Park is definitely a “must see”. And if you want to do a bit of hiking in and on the dunes, you certainly can do so — and you will pleasantly add to tour memories. Even slide down the dune face if you like. This is absolutely not “a look but don’t touch” situation. Go out and get sandy! The Thursday Tour will introduce you to the National Park and dunes, but definitely plan to spend more time there. More information — (719) 378-6300
- How about a visit to **Historic Fort Garland**, a western frontier military

post, where the legendary Col. Kit Carson was in command of the troops. The Fort was established in 1858 --- when Native American tribal units living in the area were pushing back against increasingly active settlement pressure. Walk the parade grounds, then visit the adobe buildings. A very interesting on-site museum focuses on the life and times of the Fort, and the environment in which it existed. More information — (719) 379-3512

- Manassa was the home of **heavyweight boxing champion (1919) Jack Dempsey**. Naturally, there is an interpretive museum dealing with his life and times, as well as his restored home. More information — (719) 843-5207
- Did you know there is a thriving **Amish community** in the south end of the San Luis Valley? There is, and the buggy warning signs announce its presence. Small businesses, as well as a particularly luscious bake shop that you might want to visit, are situated near Manassa.
- Also located at the south end of the Valley is the small town of Antonito, which is the Colorado terminus of the coal fired, steam powered **Cumbres and Toltec (narrow gage) Scenic Railroad** (a National Historic Landmark). This is one of the best scenic railroads in the country, without question. Visiting the railroad, which runs 64 miles from Antonito, Colorado to Chama, New Mexico, is like a trip back to the 1880's. Riding the Cumbres and Toltec is great fun, with fantastic and varied scenery at every turn, and the passing countryside comfortably viewed from authentic vintage equipment, pulled by the hard working steam engine. The ride really does feel like (and is) a big step back in time to a very different era, and includes a run through a longish hand-dug tunnel high above the river gorge. The trip is essentially an all-day adventure (with lunch at the half way point), so think of riding either before or after the meet. You will not be disappointed, and you really will fondly remember the great time you had. If you are a steam train fan, this is a must do! Please note the train trip is a one-way adventure, but you will be returned to your starting point (if you desire) just after the RR trip ends, by comfortable motor coach over Cumbres Pass. Yet more scenery to enjoy. Want more information? Visit their web site: www.cumbrestoltec.com or call (888) 286-2737 or (719) 376-5483
- Don't have a day to spend riding the train? Instead imagine driving down to **Antonito** (about 28 miles south of Alamosa) in the morning (early morning) for the steam engine startup and train departure, which is normally scheduled for 10 am. It is quite the sight and experience, the likes of which you will not readily see elsewhere, so get there early and enjoy. There are no fences to keep you at a distance, thus you can get close-up and reasonably personal with the big steam engine, as it sits in the yard/

depot, “quietly” running, waiting to depart. But always be careful, and fully follow crew orders and directions. Talking to the crew before they get ready to depart is also a possibility. The actual departure is a sight to behold. A steam engine starting to move and pulling a load is certainly a treat for the eye --- and the ear. Heavy industrial machinery of this kind is very impressive, and absolutely from another place and time. It is a gritty industrial activity, the kind of which you just don’t see much anymore, so catch the experience while you still can. Anticipate spending at least an hour (if not more) at the yards/depot, before the train departs, in order to fully absorb the sights, sounds and experience. But also be sure and check before hand for exact departure times.

- Have you been to a real (but definitely vintage) **drive-in movie theater** recently? It is possible in the San Luis Valley, and not far from Alamosa. The theater operates just like you remember, complete with speakers hanging on the car window, and a snack bar in the center of the action. They may even have vintage films playing, but the normal fare is usually current flicks. Think about this experience as yet another trip back in time to enjoy.
- Are you interested in seeing, holding (yes, we mean exactly that), and making friends with **hi-country alligators**? It can be done --- we’ve got the pictures to prove it. So exactly what is a hi-country alligator you might ask? Well, just a normal kind of alligator, but located in high and arid Colorado, rather than tropical Florida. The San Luis Valley has them at the **Alligator Farm**. Besides entertaining the turistas, they really have serious work to do in order to earn their keep. And there are other kinds of reptiles here as well. You’ll just have to visit the farm to find out what this is all about. The Alligator Farm is located about 20 miles north of Alamosa. More information — (719) 378-2612 or www.coloradogators.com
- Got creaky old bones as well as the usual aches and pains? Do you go “snap, crackle, and pop” in the morning? Alamosa is definitely the place you will want to be. There are four **natural hot springs** in the Valley that will be glad to help you out with warm and soothing mineral water. And one of these hot springs is actually located very close-by, just on the north edge of Alamosa. Plan a visit to take a dip. You will feel better. Call Splashland (719) 589-6258 in Alamosa or Sand Dunes Recreational Hot Springs Pool (719) 378-2807 in Hooper for more information.
- Don’t even ask about the UFO’s
- For information on all of the above and more, call the **Colorado Welcome Center at Alamosa** (1-800-258-7597 or 1-719-589-4840 or www.alamosa.org

These are just some of the things you can visit, experience, and enjoy in Alamosa and vicinity. Cast a wider geographical net, and there are lots more things to capture your interest. How about a visit to the Town of Creede, which is a historic mining town (silver), where colorful characters such as Calamity Jane and Bat Masterson (yes, they were real people) gave it a very distinctive flavor during its heyday. There are self-guided tours featuring Victorian-era buildings, art galleries and more. The Creede Museum calls out for a visit, as does the Creede Underground Mining Museum. But be aware that Creede is located at an elevation of 8,800’.

Remember the song by C.W. McCall, and Wolf Creek Pass (10,850’)? There really is such a place, and it’s not all that far away, and it really does (sort of) have a tunnel. But the feed store in downtown Pagosa Springs? Well it is there, but it is a rather long way from the top of the pass! You will have to remember the song to get the picture.

As the meet gets closer, we’ll be glad to supply a more complete (and updated) listing of possible activities and adventures. The 2020 Western National Meet will be a happening that you do not want to miss, one that you definitely will not forget, and one that will (enjoyably) linger in your heart and memory. Come and spend some quality time in Alamosa with your friends and The Hi-Country Regional Group, the hosts for the 2020 Western National Meet. Then stick around for a bit longer and delight in more vacation/adventure time. Plan on it!

And, most importantly, remember to save the dates! Put them on your calendar right now --- Sunday, September 20 (early registration opens) through Thursday, September 24, 2020. Or better yet, sign up now. And don’t forget the extra time to explore! You will need it. Arrive on Saturday and begin the fun early.

See you in Alamosa! And register early — not only to assure that you have got all the paperwork done, but doing early registration will save you some money. For the details, consult the registration form for the Meet.

For Registration Forms, information, and questions, please contact the following folks.

Registration

Deanie and Steve Kennedy
8137 Zang Street
Arvada, CO. 80005
303-489-3944 or 303-489-3955 (mountain time)
2020EFV8Meet@ecentral.com

General Information

Hi-Country Regional Group #28
P.O. Box 3137
Centennial, CO. 80122

F. Bernie Arellano (Meet Chairman)
303-980-8938 (mountain time)
weetiebirdcenter@comcast.net

Tom Webb (Meet Co-chair)
303-789-3956 (mountain time)
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**SOME OF THE SPECIAL RAFFLE ITEMS
that will be raffled off during the 2020 Western National Meet
in Alamosa Colorado, sponsored by the Hi-Country Regional
Group of the Early Ford V-8 Club**



Beautiful copy of a Ford Dealership neon sign. Donated by Carl O'Laughlin. Sign measures 4 foot by 2 foot and 8 inches wide. Dark blue and white porcelain and lights up in red and blue. You will have a chance to win this sign during the 2020 Western National Meet in Alamosa Colorado.

The Rocky Mountain Columbine Quilt. It was made by the Hi-Country Regional Group quilt ladies, specifically for raffle at the 2020 Alamosa Western National Meet. In finished form, it measures 73 inches by 60 inches — essentially fitting a queen sized bed. When seen in person, it is very impressive, and is something you'd love to win. The quilt center panel is comprised of a special appliqué featuring columbines, which are the Colorado State Flower. All of the fabrics used in making the quilt were batik, which speaks to the quality of the piece. Looking at the quilt, especially the center panel, will always remind you of the great time you enjoyed in Alamosa. You will have a chance to win this quilt during the 2020 Western National Meet in Alamosa Colorado.

