

# Pomeroy will be Wild West's new home

**T**he Rally America Wild West Rally moved to the small Eastern Washington town of Pomeroy. There were two reasons for the move.

First was Green Diamond Resources' action in closing their roads to future rallies. The second, and most important reason, was an invitation from Alesia Ruchert from the Palouse Economic Development Council to put on a rally in Garfield County. We have used Green Diamond Resource (Simpson Timber Co.) roads for over 30 years under an annual contact with them. It meant starting all over. I took a trip over to the Palouse to check out the roads they said were available on the map they sent. All of the roads were county roads in excellent condition. Some were way too fast and others just right. I reported my findings to the Wild West committee and Pacific Rally Group. The trips to Pomeroy, the Garfield County seat, began.

We had meetings with the county commissioners, the sheriff, the prosecuting attorney, the county engineer and of course, Ruchert. The best thing about the folks in Pomeroy and Garfield County is they are very nice and very helpful. Also, everyone knows everyone. In the meetings, it was made very clear that the welcome mat was out and if we put on a good event we would be welcome to make the Wild West Rally an annual event in Pomeroy and Garfield County.

After numerous trips to Pomeroy to lay out the course, make connections with local businesses and meet as many of the local folks as possible, we were asked to bring a rally car to the Garfield County Fair the weekend of Sept. 15. Three of our rally teams stepped up to the plate and had their cars on display. Paul Eklund's yellow Subaru, Steve Greer's wild Irish green Subaru and Erik Lyden's newly built silver Subaru were the hit of the fair. Ruchert said the attendance was the best they have experienced in years.

Finally, after a limited amount of time to plan, and numerous organizer meetings in my office, it was rally weekend. The large group of volunteers from all over Washington, Oregon and other areas went to Pomeroy. We had press from Walla Walla, Pullman, Pomeroy and Lewiston, Idaho, come to take rides in rally cars, take action photos and interview the rallyists on Friday's press day.

The Lewiston TV station's sports reporter showed up with a cameraman and

## Rally Report

**JOHN FORESPRING  
ASSISTANT RE, RALLY**

interviewed Steve and Kelly Greer and Todd Hartmann and Shawn Callahan. She also filmed many of the cars that were available. The station ran the story on their evening news. After tech at Tom Herres' Chevrolet dealership and registration at the Garfield County Fairgrounds, many of the folks headed to the welcome party at one of our local sponsors, the Up and Up Bar and Grill. There was lots of finger food and everyone had a good time.

Saturday started with a Parc Expose in a city parking lot behind the Up and Up. The Up and Up had a breakfast buffet and most of us ate heartily. The cars started at 10 a.m. and headed for the first stage east of Pomeroy. This was also the morning spectator stage.

I went to the spectator area and found around 100 folks waiting for the rally cars to appear. The sheriff was also there with a radar gun. Unfortunately two of the crowd favorites, Steve Greer (rolled) and Erik Lyden (hit a bank at the same instruction) did not make it to the spectator area. The fast car, according to Sheriff Larry Bowles, was Todd Hartmann at 99 and 120 mph.

The afternoon spectator area at an area called New York Gulch was just as popular. Once again, Sheriff Bowles was using his radar and once again, Hartmann was fastest. The day ended with a barbecue at the fairgrounds. Pomeroy Foods and the Palouse Economic Development Council provided finger food and Kim Craddock, Northwest Region treasurer and PRG head, and her family provided meats for the barbecue. Lynn Needham finished the scores and Eklund was first.

Sunday started at the Garfield County Fairgrounds, the location for service and many folks who were camping. The cars headed southwest and ran three stages twice.

The first stage was a clay road with little gravel and we were concerned that if it rained the road would be impassable. It did not rain.

The second stage climbed to more than 3,700 feet and featured a fast finishing straight. The fastest car was clocked at 108 mph.

The third stage was shortened due to concerns of a local but still featured a good spectator area.

The weather was cold and there weren't as many spectators. Those who did come had great show and when I followed the sweep team out I saw there were many locals who were watching at other locations.

The rally finished early Sunday afternoon and Subaru Northwest arranged the awards dinner with the Sagebrush Grill. The food was excellent. Needham, once again, finished the scores quickly and they were posted on time.

There were no queries and the awards were made with special awards to Ruchert for all of her hard work and the people of Garfield County for being so great. Two of the county commissioners, Dean Burton and Butch Klaveano, had volunteered and were present so I presented the award to them. Eklund and Jeff Price won the award for the overall victory for the two days of the Wild West Rally.

Monday was the meeting with county commissioners and Grant Morgan, the county engineer. I presented each of them with a copy of the route book, supplemental regulations, the safety plan, my welcome letter and service crew instructions so they could see what documents we used to put on the event. I also gave a short report on the success of the event.

They expressed their pleasure at how professional all of the volunteers were, including newly recruited local folks. They were amazed to see 11 sweep vehicles with EMTs, medics and nurses on board, including a number of local volunteers. They were pleased with the impressed with the good behavior of the rally teams including the service crews. A fairgrounds worker said that if the other users left the place as nice as we did, she wouldn't have a job. The commissioners and the county engineer agreed that they wanted us to return.

## Conclusions

I have helped organize rallies here, in Oregon, in Nevada and Jamaica. The folks in Pomeroy and Garfield County made the 2007 Wild West Rally one of the easiest and most fun to organize of any event I have worked on. We will return next year with a Rallycross in conjunction with their fair and the Wild West Rally the following weekend.