



The official news source of SCCA's Northwest Region

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Transportation.

THE OREGON TRAIL RALLY went very well. Forty-one competitors started, and almost all finished. The event was held south of Hood River and The Dalles, Ore., on May 15-17 for the most part. The back-roads were great and the weather was spectacular, a good thing since some folks had to walk in 3 miles to get to the spectator areas.

The rally began at Portland International Raceways. There were vendors and food stands on site. Workers got their T-shirts and care packages donated by Subaru.

There was an excellent workers' banquet held after the event. Travis Pastrana signed autographs and visited with everyone as he did at Olympus. The NBC TV station in Portland did a piece on the 11 p.m. news. I don't know if other stations did also.

Oregon Region did a great job of pulling their event together. Just like we do in the NWR, sometimes getting roads to run on is a challenging task. To keep the competitor interested, variety in stages is always a goal.

SPECTATORS are a very important part of the sport. We very much want them at all of the events. They have a huge positive impact on the local economy and they promote our activities by their presence. Their numbers were the result of excellent promotion at the last two Rally events in Oregon and Washington.

I think that we must rethink the management of their masses. In Oregon, if there were 250 spectators at the area I worked there were 100 coolers brought in. You can guess there was beer or booze in them. I saw three barbecues carried up the hillside. Remember that we are in the woods. Two dogs (loose) were almost hit by rally cars or sweep vehicles. Spectators ran across the road between rally cars running at speed. The dust made it very difficult to see

rally cars coming.

There were 10 road marshals at that area and the chief was doing his level best to control the crowd and the marshals. Many folks just ignored them. I wouldn't say we had any pedestrian close calls, but the potential was there. I think a lot of it was due to the drinking at this area. Lack of respect for authority was probably the other element in the misbehavior. The violators were the younger people.

At the Olympus Rally here, every possible parking place was also filled. We even had to turn spectators away. Enthusiasts were in place hours before the stages started. One thing that worked very well was having the chief marshal at Wreck Creek take his travel trailer there and set up everything the day before. Vern Oldfield (Barney's grandson) is big enough to toss a Kenworth truck over a cliff. He was not bashful about recruiting more help from onlookers.

Despite the programs with their instructions and the very diligent road marshals, a few spectators drove on hot stages prior to the sweep vehicles closing the course.

Spectators were stealing the commercial sponsor signs during the stages. With hundreds of people at viewing areas it was very difficult to keep track of those items. When they take the signs on the first day of the event there are no signs for the rest of the rally.

The problem will probably never be completely resolved, but we could do better. Safety always has to be a major concern. As the rally safety chief, I am open to suggestions.

IN APPRECIATION: Northwest Region, SCCA and Pacific Rally Group express their sincere thanks to Northwest Subaru for their most generous contributions to both the region and to many of our local events.

Assistant RE-Rally Frank Hamilton: rallyguy@comcast.net.

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