4th Annual Mt. Grant Challenge Draws Large Crowd

The 4th Annual 911 Memorial Mt. Grant Challenge held on Saturday, September 13th, near Hawthorne, Nevada. An official Nevada 150 event, finisher’s each received a specially minted challenge coin/geodetic marker replica with the Sesquicentennial logo on the back. The Challenge was to hike to the top of the highest point in Mineral County, Mt. Grant which towers over the community at 11,239 feet. Most of the 94 participants began before sunrise near Walker Lake at an elevation of a little more than 4200 feet. Although the air was brisk in the morning, high temperatures made this year’s Challenge, well, a bit more challenging to those who scaled the 7000 feet incline hike.

The event included more than 20 local youth who were invited to participate and given free access to this year’s event because of generous sponsorship donations. With all the volunteers, emergency personnel and participants more than 120 people enjoyed the day on the mountain trail.

The 911 Memorial Challenge Committee has been meeting for months to organize the event which clearly supports the community of Hawthorne’s theme of “America’s Patriotic Home.” The Challenge is designed to be both mentally and physically grueling and proceeds from the event helps support the maintenance of the community’s Veterans Memorial Park and the flying of one of the largest American flags in the state of Nevada. Offering continuous support and resources since the Challenge’s inception, both SOC Nevada LLC and the Hawthorne Army Depot have been instrumental in sustaining this event. When the support of the firefighters, EMT’s and law enforcement is added in, the event is quite a testimony to the memory of 911.

This year the youngest hikers were 10-years old, completing the most grueling portion of the climb and receiving their finisher’s coins. The eldest competitor was a 74-year old man from Illinois, who was among the 43 participant from out of the area. Finishers of this year’s event included Lt. Col. Gregory Gibbons, commander of the Hawthorne Army Depot, the current Mineral County Sheriff and deputies, Hawthorne Volunteer Fire Department Chief and SOC Nevada’s Fire Chief. The first to reach to summit was Michael Christenson of Fernley, Nevada, finishing in 4 hours 49 minutes.

Demonstrating the viability of this event as a tourism draw, 43 participants were from out of the area. Funds from the Mineral County Fair and Recreation Board have helped promote this event for the past two years and it is anticipated that a grant from the Nevada Commission on Tourism will be applied for next year. Participants from out-of-town were:

Luca Baradel, San Francisco, California

Betty Bishop, Reno, Nevada

Ephrat Bitton , San Francisco, California

Roy and Marlene Begay, Schurz, Nevada

Michael Berry, Crater Lake, Oregon

Patrick Botsford, Pleasant Hill, Washington

Connie Brant, Reno, Nevada

Kerry Breen, Tracy, California

Kyle Breen, Vallejo, California

Jay Bruins, Los Altos, California

Lisa Buckley, Corona del Mar, California

Josh Carlson, Coal Valley, Illinois

Michael Christiansen, Fernley, Nevada

Jason Dean, Sparks, Nevada

Jay Dolan, San Diego, California

Heather Edwall, Mammoth Lakes, California

Dick Ellsworth, Quincy, Illinois

Amanda Etheridge, Elko, Nevada

Mihai Giurgiulescu, Valley Village, California

Stephanie Goodwin, Fallon, Nevada

Robert Greco, Sparks, Nevada

Tana Gurule

Gwen Hosey, Wellington, Nevada

Brian Kharrl, Fallon, Nevada

Andrew Kirmse, Redwood City, California

Kyle Leslie, Carson City, Nevada

John Lockwood, Schurz, Nevada

Sunny Martin, Sparks, Nevada

Deanna McAninch, Reno, Nevada

Sara Mikulich, Fallon, Nevada

Ramie Millsap, Reno, Nevada

Juanita Navarro, San Clemente, California

Gary Novotny, Reno, Nevada

Gerry Pennington, Spring Creek, Nevada

Theodore Pfister, South Lake Tahoe, California

Chris Prince, San Francisco, California

Keith Randall, Los Altos Hills, California

Andres Schriner, Richmond City, Califrona

Arvin and Janice Shepherd, Grand Junction, Colorado

Vicki Varain, Schurz, Nevada

Jeff Webb, Hawaii

Of course, the event wouldn’t be a success without our local participants:

Tammy Adams

Oya Bryant

Sherry Cardenas

Shannon Erickson

Lt. Col. Gregory Gibbons

Matthew Goodrich

Randy Gurule

Sheriff Stewart Handt

Amanda Kunzi

Rose Laing

Cheri Lockwood

Rob Mathias

Nellie Morgan

LaReita Parker

Amanda Peterson

Phyllis Rebottaro

District Attorney Sean Rowe

Tiffany Shields

Jim Stallings

Chris Summerbell

Kathy Trujillo

Tina Trujillo

Dave Womack

This year there were two participants from the Hawthorne Intermediate School ( 10-years old) who completed a portion of the climb with the assistance of Karen Womack and who received their finisher’s coins:

Sofia Castillo-Trujillo

Braeden Womack

Sponsored participants from Mineral County High School who participated in the complete Challenge were:

Alfonso Castillo-Trujillo

Dory E. Dudley

Taylor Fund

Juan Hernandez

Ryan Holley

Miles King

Kyler Musselmann

Diego Pittman

Tristan Reynolds

Shyla Regusi

Paul Rodriques

Peter Rowe

Julian Rudd

Trudi Sandvick

Michael Smith

Chance Sterns

Rebecca Wadlow

Michael Wadlow

Brandon West



Hawthorne’s big flag being raised at Veteran’s Memorial Park during the annual Armed Forces Day Celebration. Photo by Beverly Orozco, Hawthorne, Nevada



In addition to a specially designed Nevada Sesquicentennial finisher’s coin and commemorative t-shirt, those completing the 911 Memorial Mt. Grant Challenge are treated to an exceptional view of Walker Lake, the Army Ammunition Depot and the community of Hawthorne. On a clear day, one can see nearby mountain ranges that are 120 miles away.



One of the last to finish this year’s 911 Memorial Mt. Grant Challenge was No. 150, Kathy Trujillo a member of Team YOLO (You Only Live Once) consisting of Hawthorne Volunteer Fire Department Chief, Dave Womack, Oya Bryant, and SOC Fire Chief Robert Mathias. The trek took them well over 10 hours.