

How to Plan and Lead Rallies



RV Resume

- Phyllis Slaughter
- Nov 2005 (12+ years)
- 1,000 nights
- 160,000 miles
- 47 states and 7 provinces
- 500+ campgrounds



We bought our Roadtrek in Nov 2005 used. It is our first RV. We were tent campers before buying it. Since then we have driven 160,000 miles, 1,000 nights on the road (averaging about 80 per year) been in 47 states and 7 provinces, and stayed in over 500 campgrounds. With a Roadtrek we can move easily to the next campground down the road.

Rally resume

- VP Roadtrek International
(Southcentral Region) 6 years
- Planned/led 15 or so rallies
- 10-92 RV's
- Rally coach
- Attended *many*
rallies



John and I have been VPs for Roadtrek Region 7 for 6 years. Region 7 is similar to the Southcentral Region of FMCA and covers Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Like many of you we belong to more than one RV group. I have planned and lead about 15 rallies with anywhere from 10 to 92 RV's. In addition I have acted as a coach, advising and answering questions for several other folks who were doing rallies. And of course, we have attended many rallies.



Disclaimer

- Based on my experiences
- May or may not work with your group
- Not selling or getting commissions from CG, bus company, or Visitor Centers
- This presentation is available at:
region7rally.org/wp/into



What I say here is based on my experiences. The groups I am in and did rallies for are both class B groups. So some of my ideas may not work for your group. But I hope you get some ideas and perspective on rally planning.

I am not selling anything. At the end of the presentation I won't offer to plan your rally for a \$100 and hour consulting fee. I do not nor want to do that. Any mention of a campground, bus company or other entity is my opinion and I do not get a commission from them.

What we are going to cover

- Types of rallies, what you can do
- Considerations when planning
- Registration
- How much should the rally fee cost?
- Tips
- Questions



If the clock does not run out, this is what we will cover.

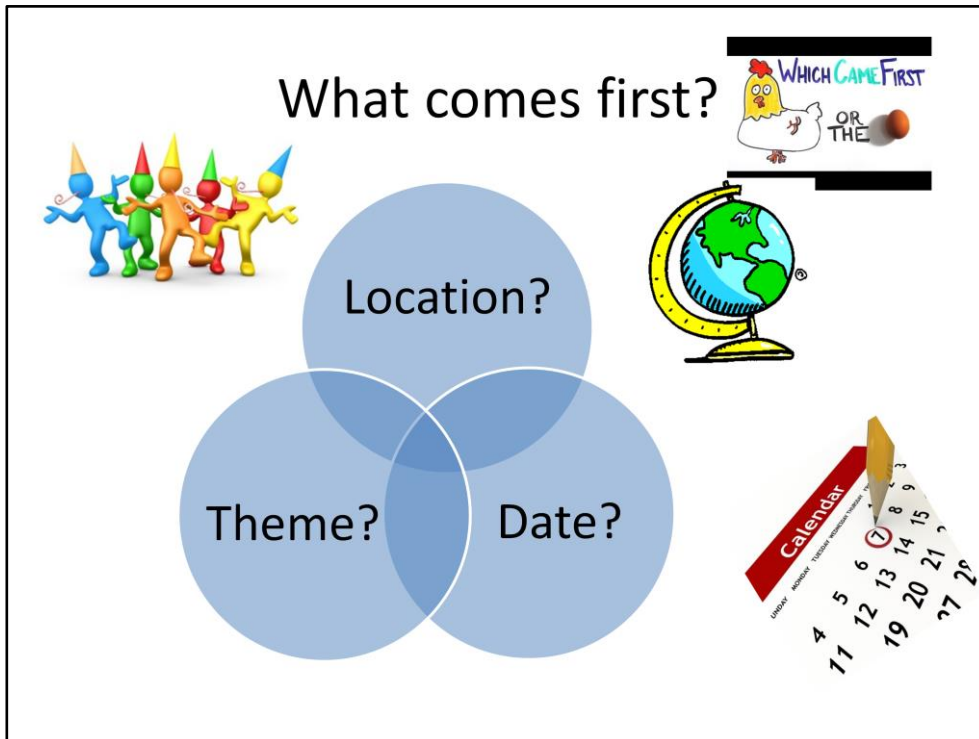
Type of rally?

- Theme? Or purpose?
- Location?
- Structured?
- Informal?
- Business meeting?
- Rolling rally?



Fall 2009	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 AM	CHEM 101 LAB N1 (30576)		BIOL 107 LAB D19 (30399) BS CW 102		BIOL 107 TAPH B12 (39637) BS S 115
9:00 AM		CHEM 101 LEC H1 (30544) C E1 60		CHEM 101 LEC H1 (30544) C E1 60	MATH 113 LAB K7 (31328) SAB 229
10:00 AM					
11:00 AM	BIOL 107 LEC A01 (32934) RTL B1 001	MATH 113 LEC K1 (31287) TL B 2	BIOL 107 LEC A01 (32934) RTL B1 001	MATH 113 LEC K1 (31287) TL B 2	BIOL 107 LEC A01 (32934) RTL B1 001
12:00 PM		BIOL 122 LEC A21 (38981) MC L 4		BIOL 122 LEC A21 (38981) MC L 4	BIOL 122 LEC A21 (38981) MC L 4
1:00 PM	BIOC 100 LEC A2 (31818) TL 12		BIOC 100 LEC A2 (31818) TL 12		BIOC 100 LEC A2 (31818) TL 12
2:00 PM		CHEM 101 SEM L10 (30555)			

Rallies come in different forms. We will be talking about these forms in the next slides.



So what comes first the chicken or the egg?
Or in rally terms, do you find a location, pick a theme or pick a date?
Sometimes the date is determined by the location or theme.
Sometimes the location is determined by the date... etc
So which comes first often depends on the type of rally you are doing.

Themed Rally



Fixed Date



Specific activity

If you want to have a rally at a concert, the Cranberry Festival in Warrens, WI, etc. you need to have it on the dates that coincide with event. Oktoberfest in May won't cut it. Your theme is the event and the dates are mostly fixed. The Albuquerque Balloon Festival runs 9 days, so for that event you have some latitude for picking dates.

OTHER THEMES



Fixed agenda (like Star Party, Tech rally or Dog rally)

Dates are more flexible

Experience local attractions like Shows in Branson, Grove OK, DC, wine country

Other themes do not have fixed dates. For example, we did a Star Party Rally. (Stars in the sky not Hollywood). We went to Comanche Springs Astronomy Campus where they have several telescopes and we spent a few days studying the sky.

One of our Roadtrek members had a Dog Rally. They had a dog nutritionist speak, a dog trainer come, and had dog events. These themes have flexible dates and locations.

The rallies where local attractions are featured have flexibility of date but not so much so for location.



Possible Rally themes

- Technology and Camping
- Biking/Hiking Rally
- Game theme
- Genealogical Research and Family
- Halloween Party
- Birding and Camping
- Beach Party



Some possible themes

Tech rally may include seminars on RV plumbing, electrical, refrigerators etc. Or computer topics. Like the Geeks on Tour.

Possible Place Rallies

- Ohio Amish Rally
- Watkins Glen and Finger Lakes NY
- Monterey Bay Rally
- Smaller towns – Columbia MO, Glenrose TX, Hot Springs AR, Tucson AZ, a town near you
- Wine Country (in almost any state)



Possible place rallies.

Do not sell smaller places short. These towns with their neighboring towns have lots to offer.

Rolling Rallies



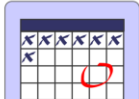
- Several stops
- Example: Trail of Lewis and Clark
- Lots of fun
- Requires planning for:
 - Several camp grounds
 - Venues
 - Driving time
 - Caterers



Another kind of rally is a Rolling Rally where the people and their RV's move from one location to another. This may requires lots of planning. But gives the attendees a chance to experience several places or a group of related places like the Trail of Lewis and Clark.



Picking a date

- Check dates of other events in the area where you want to have your rally
- Weather- New England in Jan? 
- When some of you winterize and thaw your RV's
- When venues close for the season 
- Conflicts with holidays and other rallies 

Maybe you want to do a ski rally in New England in Jan??

Don't plan a rally in Indy around Memorial Day if you are not going to the Indy500 as part of your rally. WHY?

Rally in early March in Texas- maybe but not for colder climate folks. Not if there is a big RV show near by, or an FMCA Rally. A rally right before or after may be good, but a month earlier or later may not be good.

Rolling up the sidewalks after Labor day to April or May



Location, location, location

- If attending an event then location fixed
- Dog rally, tech rally location can vary (to much to do in area deter from rally)
- “Exploring the area rallies” need an area worth exploring
- Transportation-distances
- Campground availability



Event rallies, like a concert or the balloon festival, the location needs to be at or near the event. When picking a location for a theme like a dog rally or tech rally, pick a location that does not have too many distractions. For example, our region had a tech rally at the casino RV park in Thackerville, OK- Nothing to do but rally and casino. We did leave one afternoon free for casino, but there was no where else of interest. A tech rally at Fort Wilderness at Disney World may offer too many distractions to more interesting places than hearing in how to winterize or plumbing basics.

In picking a location transportation or distances may be an issue. We will discuss this further. Also, an interesting place or a neat event may have no campgrounds near by or none available.

Will talk more about campgrounds and transportation



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Picking a campground

- Location in relationship to what you are doing
- The campground has had Rallies there before (does this matter?)
- Can handle 20-30 (or how many) RV's for the rally
- Can we camp near party room, showers and relatively together?
- Can the rally leader assign sites? (*Why?*)



Socialization is better if close together. Also if close to event area may not need carts.

I like to assign the sites. The campgrounds have been good with this. They give me a group of sites (like site 2 to 35 except 23 and 28) and I place people. Why do I do this? Next slide.

Why do I assign sites?

- Walking difficulties?
- Part of the program- lots of trips
- The Smith's want next to the Jones'
- Pets near pet walk
- Can not sign up for program and not campground
- I know where everyone is parked
- Give Campground list of people/site



For Chris' presentation on maximizing storage in the RV, she had lots of containers and items to carry to the presentation, so I parked her close by the presentation location.

I always give the campground a list of who is in which site. I include names, addresses, phone numbers, make and model, and plate numbers.



Picking a campground

- Facilities
 - electric, water, sewer or dump station
 - Size of sites?
 - Clean? Laundry?
 - Party room? Other gathering places?
- Visit the campground
- Price
- Dry camping???
- Outdoor picnic area only?



You can limit it to 15 or 20 or 30 RV's if facilities are not available.

A picture is worth a 1,000 words, but actually seeing the campground is worth a lot more.

Check the bathroom. If it is clean and working that is a good sign. Fairgrounds sometimes have marginal restrooms and showers. One county fair grounds had showers but they only worked for tall people. And then there are the ones with one shower room. And the ones so bad I would not take a shower in.

Most campground give a rally discount and many do not charge for the party room if there is a minimum (8? Or 10?) RV's.

One government owned charged more for rallies because they are more work. They generate trash, require the rest rooms to be cleaned etc. Of course, we just gave them 4 nights times 25 RV's during the week in September when they would normally have one or two.

Dry camping has it cons. Some may not come for that reason.

Weather may make limited AC or heat a problem. But there are places like Death Valley where that is the almost only option.

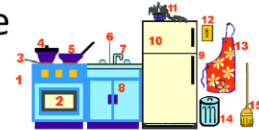
The outdoor picnic area in WI we used a few years ago was great until it rained and the wind blew.



The party Room



- Large enough for your sessions and meals at tables
- Do you need a kitchen in party room?
- What does kitchen have? Stove? Microwave, coffee pots?
- Do they require you use their caterer? Cost?
- Can we have a pot luck or bring in muffins for breakfast? (*do you need this?*)
- Cost for party room? Include table chairs?



If they campground says it can hold 60 in the room, verify it is 60 at tables.

If they charge you for the party room, ask if it includes tables and chairs. Yes, I visited one campground where they wanted \$3 per table and \$1.50 per chair per day.



Meals?



- Breakfast- Full cooked? catered? Muffins and bagels? Coffee only? no breakfast?
- Lunch- on own? Or provided?
- Dinner- pot luck? Catered? Local menu?
- Picking up BBQ or Pizza?
- Cost factor. Pickup vs delivered and served



Cost- catered cost (\$10-15 per person per day) My experience.. (\$2-4 per person per day for muffins/bagels

Trouble- need to put food out, clean up, make coffee, bring coffee pots, have paper goods.

Other?

Picked up BBQ – it is cheaper than delivered and served. May need paper goods

At Hot Springs Rally, we ate lunch on our own while in town. The Star party was 25 miles to anywhere, so we included all 3 meals.



Do your own Meals?

- Meals you are doing may depend on the kitchen in the party room.
- Need paper goods (or everyone bring their own dishes?)
- Work involved- some prep and clean up
- Served by volunteer members?
- Coffee pots?
- Left overs?
- About Potlucks



My experience is that muffins/bagels, juice, coffee breakfast cost \$2-4 per person per day if we bring it from Sam's/Costco's vs. \$10-15 per day per person for the same meal catered. It is more work to bring the food, put it out and clean up afterwards. (Get help from the attendees.) But it cost a lot less.

Picked up BBQ – it is cheaper than delivered and served. May need paper goods

Lunch at Hot Springs in town Lunch at Star Party (25 miles to anything).

Think about leftovers. What are you going to do with them?

About potlucks- they work for 10-25 “pots”. Too large or too small of a group does not work well. Also, the first night allows those coming from home to bring the pot from home.



Catered Meals

Understand cost (\$16 Plus tax? Plus tip?=\$20)

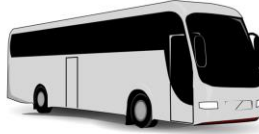
- What is includes? Drinks, dessert? Serving?
- Discuss group- children? Seniors?
- Delivery time, expected to eat time
- If possible, try food before commitment
- Ask for recommendations from visitor center, campground and other
- **Check on them month, week before**



Line up the caterer, campground, and venues before setting rally fee. One month before contact all and let them know you are still a go. You might indicate if you are way over or under your original estimate of attendees. One week before confirm the expected numbers with the caterer, campground and venue. Make sure they respond. The rally leader for the one rally I attended could not get a hold of the Monday caterer a month before, a week before, a day before. Finally on the afternoon of the event they found out that caterer was out of business. The rally attendees were not too happy to have peanut and jelly sandwiches for dinner.

Transportation

- Drive your tow car or RV
- Car pool
- Nice bus
- School Bus
- Venue provided transportation
- Local transportation



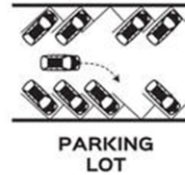
Transportation is a bigger deal for us Class B folks since only a very few tow a car. So we need to unhook, store everything and drive our Roadtrek to the museum or other venue. Then we need to park it and run the frig on battery.

By using a bus, venue or local transportation we all arrive at the same time and leave at the same time. People visit on the bus promoting friendships.

Transportation

- Drive your RV or tow to the venues

- Is there enough parking at your destination?
- Is it surface parking vs garage?
- Cost to park?
- “car pooling” or RV pooling



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- Nice bus

- Has bathroom
- Comfortable seats
- For long distances
- \$\$\$\$\$

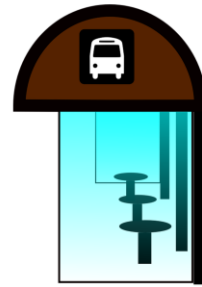


If you are driving a tow car, a garage is not an issue. However, us class B guys are too tall for most garages.

Comfortable bus is nice if you are going for an hour or more. Remember the bus company charge by the mile, by the hour (starting from the bus barn) and for the bus. So it is the same price whether every seat is taken or not.

Transportation

- School Bus
 - Not as comfortable as other bus
 - Short distance OK
 - Not available everywhere
 - **Durham Bus company**
- Venue provided transportation
 - Go to hotels to pick up why not Campground?
- Local transportation- campground on bus line?

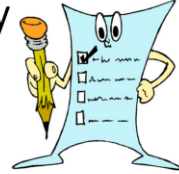


One rally the school bus cost \$450 per bus per day. The bus held 45 people so it cost \$10 per day per person. The nice bus \$2025 per day or \$45 per person assuming all 45 seats were taken. Charge by bus, miles and hours. It is a Fixed cost. Bus sizes vary. Make sure you know how many people per bus. We have limited the number of rally attendees by the bus size. If the bus holds 45 and you have 46 people, you need two buses. Which doubles your bus cost.

San Antonio and Eureka Springs had public transportation at or near the campground.

Activities

- Do not plan every minute – allow free time
- One morning, one afternoon activity
- Entertainment can be:
 - Local speaker
 - Local entertainment (maybe from a school)
 - Movie and popcorn
- Open discussion on Rving, your rig maintenance, other tips
- Time to visit



We had a speaker from the local museum talk about the history of the place. She would have talked for free, but we donated \$100 to the museum. At the PEI rally, students from the Bagpipe college entertained for a donation. In Hot Springs we had the Readers group from a local church come. Members have been known to bring their instruments and volunteer to play one evening for the group. You do not have to hire big name entertainment.

An RV movie like The Long Long Trailer with Lucy Ball with popcorn can offer fun low cost entertainment.



Resources

- Visitor center for area
- RV dealer
- The campground
- People who live in area
- Tourists
- Internet - Google
- Other?



Visitor centers are very corporative. They will give you 25, 30 or how many copies of literature you need as well as help on what to do, caterers and dining local.

RV dealers sometimes will give door prizes and information.

Talk to members who live local. They may know entertainment, caterers, and sites to see.

\$\$\$ Figuring Cost \$\$\$

- All pay as the go
- Fee per RV and per person
- Combination of the two



The way I see it there are 3 ways to fund a rally. 1) All the attendees make their own campground reservations, pay for any meals and events as they attend them. 2) Have a rally fee that covers camping, meals, and events. Or 3) a combination of the two

Pay as you go



Pros

- Do not need to collect money
- Rally cost for individual varies with activities
- Less formal



Cons

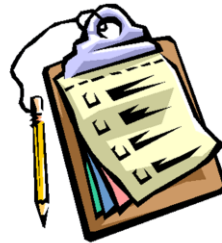
- No pain to leave early
- No pain for no-shows
- Activities may not have enough attendees to fill seats or get discounts
- May not know who and how many are coming
- Sites?



One group I am in always does the Pay as you go method. Everyone lets the organizer know they plan to attend, but they make their camping reservations. As the rally goes along they pay for their meals, admissions etc. There are advantages to this method, especially for a small group and for informal group. However, some of the rallies, people do not show. I think every rally we have a few who leave early for a good reason. However, this messes up the counts for activities. We have had a venue expecting a certain number and giving us a discount based on that number then a few back out, causing the venue to change the price. One case we had the required 10 RV's signed up to get the party room free. Then the day of the event, one backed out. Had they paid a head for the rally they would not have gotten a refund and we would have paid for 10 sites. However, with 9 sites we were faced with splitting the \$50 a day for the party room among the other 9.

Fee per RV and per person

- All meals, camping and activities included
- Lots of planning
- Could Cost higher \$\$\$\$
- Collect and manage money
- Too much togetherness?



If your rally includes all meals, camping and activities it takes planning all the activities, could cause the cost to be high and it may be too much togetherness.

Combination



- Example:
- Includes breakfast, some dinners
- If going to area with lots of places to eat lunch on own
- If big lunch, I would not include dinner
- Optional activities – individual pay for on day of the event



I prefer a rally that is a combination of everything on your own and some activities and camping included.

For example, the rally may include breakfast, some dinners, and maybe a few or no lunches. If you are going somewhere as a group and there is an near by area with places to eat, you can let them have lunch on their own. If you are going someplace where lunch as a group would work, for example a winery or historic restaurant, then including lunch works well. If the group lunch is a full hot lunch, maybe dinner will be on their own or order subway.

Some rallies we have offered an optional event that the attendees paid for on the day of the event only if they go. Examples: walking tour of the town, and the San Antonio bus tour.

\$\$\$ Figuring Cost \$\$\$

- How much should the rally fee be?
- Kinds of cost:
 - Cost per person
 - Fixed cost no matter how many attend



How do you figure the cost or the rally fee?

There are two kinds of cost. We will discuss these on the next slides.



Fixed cost

- Cost the same if you have 20, 30 or 40 people
- Speaker or entertainment may charge \$300 to perform; He/she does not charge by the person.
- Bus- cost by hour and miles even if bus is not full (may want to limit attendees by bus size)
- Decorations (optional)



Fixed cost does not vary with the number of people attending. For example if the bus cost \$600 and there is 30 people it is \$20 per person; if there is 55 people (a full bus), it is about \$11 per person. When doing your budget and planning these expenses, it really helps to have a good idea of how many would come. Look at past rally attendances to get a guess. You could take a pole of your members to see who is interested. Our Region rallies have from 20-30 Roadtreks in attendance. Our chapter rallies are larger and get 60-100. But this depends on your group.



Example

\$300 entertainment

- If 10 people, \$30 each
- If 20 people, $(300/20)=\$15$ each
- If 30 people, \$10 each



Cost by attendee or RV

- Camping fee by RV
- Food per person
- Handouts
- Admissions to venues by person



The camping fee is by RV but everything else is by person. Do not forget that the price per day per RV needs to be multiplied by the number of days (3 or 4?). About 1/3 of our rallies are Solos-Roadtreks with one person. So we always calculate a fee for one person in one RV and two people in one RV. We have a few that travel with adult disabled children and, also, have a price for 3.



Example cost

		Cost per person		
		30	50	60
		people	people	people
Breakfast (coffee, muffins, juice) X 4 days		8	8	8
Dinner at \$25 each		25	25	25
Admissions \$5		5	5	5
ETC				
Total		38	38	38

I make a spreadsheet with the cost and do an estimate base on a minimum, max and median number of attendees. From there I usually take the medium to calculate the fee. My minimum is the smallest amount I could have and still break even. In other words, the cost is closer to the minimum but the fee is closer to the medium.

The rally fee

- Calculate cost per person (meals, admissions)
- Calculate shared cost (like entertainment)
- Set price for one person with RV
 - Camping 3 nights \$90 + 60 meals + share of entertainment (\$20) + admissions (\$20) = **\$190**
- Set price per 2 people 1 RV
 - Camping 3 nights \$90 + **120** meals + share of entertainment **(\$40)** + admissions **(\$40)** = **\$290**
- Set price for extra person
 - \$60 meals + share of entertainment (\$20) + admissions (\$20) \$100 (no camping)= **\$100**



Things to watch for

Two people in an RV pay for 2 dinners, 2 admissions, 2 shares of entertainment, however, only one campsite

- Quantity discounts- (admission \$5 each but \$45 for 10 people)
- Build in **your** expenses (policy of group??)
- Flexibility to cancel or add meal or event
- What if I come out over or under by more than a slice of pizza?

It is very hard to have the fees collected match the cost exactly. I usually have a few flexible items. Ones I could cut or add if we are short of over. For example: having cookies (from the store) for dessert instead of cobbler, having an unannounced event that can be cancelled (like Painting with a Twist).

Usually I have some unannounced extras I could add if we collect more than we need like adding a pizza night or Subway for dinner when dinner was not expected to be supplied.

What else can you do if you are over?

- 1) Give refunds to the attendees
- 2) With their permission, give money to the non-profit the group visited
- 3) Give it to the treasurer of your chapter or group for a rally that gets in trouble
- 4) Have a drawing for gas cards you bought with the excess



- [illegible]



I maintain a separate checking account that only handles rallies and certain other events I do for other organizations. This is not necessary but you really should keep a detailed spreadsheet of the fees collected and the expenses. Besides future rally planning and maybe for your club treasurer, you want to be able to easily show you collected \$X for the rally and spent \$X. The rally fees were not ordinary income that the IRS found in an audit. One rally I did I collected quite a lot of money, but I have records to show the expenses equal the collection.



Cost too much?

- Break point- value for dollars spent
- What do members want?
 - More meals? Less meals?
 - Transportation?
 - Lots of activity? Little activity?
 - Kinds of activities?
- Know your potential attendees

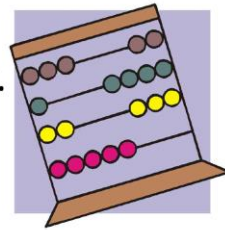


When does a rally cost too much?

Registration



- 2 news letter rule or 3-4 months
- FMCA magazine???
- Paper form?
- On-line registration? Google forms?
- Registration deadline (2 weeks?)
- Got to know how many are coming.



Our Roadtrek club requires advertising in 2 (every other month) newsletters or 3-4 month before a rally. Let potential attendees know what you are planning early even if the fee is not in cement yet.

For our chapter we use a paper form for rallies. In our region there is on line registration but not on-line payment. But John and I have the skill to do this. For the techies in the crowd. We use WordPress with an add on and a little HTML and PHP. If you are not into creating your own code, you might look at Google Forms for registration. Or use a paper form.

Registration information



- Event registering for (wrong rally?)
- Name, address, phone (cell, too (why?)), email
- Number of persons
- Amount enclosed (fee correct for number?)
- RV type and size? tow car?
- Pets?
- Special request or comments
- Where to mail the form and check

So what information do we collect on line or on paper?

The first line of the form asks for the event name. They may think they are registering for some other event.

Example

ROADTREK CHAPTER RALLY REGISTRATION FORM
Sept 11-15, 2017
Elkhart County Fairgrounds, Goshen, IN

Please make check (U.S. Funds) payable to Robert Jones and mail with this registration form to

Robert Jones 111 Some St. Cleveland, OH 44278

Number attending : 2

Rally fee enclosed: \$ 315

Last Name: Slaughter

First Name: John

Spouse: Phyllis

Street: 999 Main

City: Richardson

State: TX Zip: 75081

Phone 972-222-2222

Cell phone: 972-111-1111 (Phyllis)

Email phyllis@pochiro.com

Full name of guest(s) if any: _____

Roadtrek model and year Versatile 2002 License#: TX DS7 K962 FMCA# F369260

Is this your first Roadtrek Rally? X NO Do you have chapter Badges? X YES

Are you bringing pets? yes X NO

Comments/special needs: Have projector, plates, etc. Please park near meeting room _____

This is a mock up of registration for our last chapter rally in Goshen. Look at the fields.

What do you do with the info?



- Keep track of who is coming, payments, and refunds
- Make a spreadsheet from registration info
- Make a list for the campground
- Make an attendee list for attendees
- Assign campsites
- Email them you got their check

This is where I get the list for the campground and other attendees.

When their check arrives I send them a quick email letting them know I got it.

Tips- Advice

- Keep track of your expenses and income
- It is fun and not that hard



- Where do I find this presentation?
- region7rally.org/wp/into

It has really been fun doing rallies. I learned about the destinations and made many friends by doing the rallies.

Questions???

