

## Most entries ever for MDA Benefit Car Show at Lucky 7 in Smith River

August 19, 2020





Ken Avery had come from Idaho to Brookings with his wife and RV for a week's vacation.

An owner of a classic 1957 Ford station wagon, Avery has a keen eye for special vehicles. On Saturday he noticed a 1969 GTO on Highway 101 in Brookings near the Chetco River Bridge headed south. It was soon followed by a black, convertible 1939 Bantam.

“Something’s going on,” Avery said to himself, then followed the cars south on to Smith River where he was happy to find the Annual MDA Benefit Car Show at the Lucky 7 Casino.

Avery had good timing.

This year’s show, from Aug. 14-16, was the largest in it’s 22-year history, according to co-organizer Tom Lee. He said there were 132 entrants with another 10 to 15 others who just showed up but were not officially part of the show.

“Normally, like last year, we had 85 cars. This was our most attended we’ve ever had,” Lee said. “I’d say it was because of lack of other car shows because of COVID. There have not been too many shows put on this year.”

Lee said the event raised about \$4,500 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. He first volunteered about 12 years ago to help the event’s founder Dayl Nimie, who suffers from MD but is still going strong.

The Lucky 7 Casino has sponsored the event all 22 years, said a very appreciative Lee.

“They (Lucky 7) furnish everything. They buy the t-shirts, allow us to sell them, then turn over all the money directly to MDA,” Lee said. “They also pay for trophies, all the printing, all the forms we need. Their stake in this is well over \$3,000 out of their own pocket.”

Additionally, this year, Lee said the casino kicked in prizes for the top four finishers — \$777 for best in show and \$77 each for best interior, best engine and best paint.

Each top winner traveled far to participate in the show.

Best in show went to Lynda Giangreco, the owner of a 1970 Dodge Challenger from Central Point, Oregon.

Best paint went to Coos Bay resident Mark Castor's 1972 Plymouth Duster.

Best interior went to a 1955 GMC Suburban, owned by Ron Semoni of Murphy, Oregon.

Best engine was given to John Palazzoto's 1955 Chevrolet which he brought all way up from Discovery Bay, California — a one-way trip of 479 miles.

Lucky 7 marketing director Devin Jacot said he was able to talk most of the show's participants into staying at the casino's Howonquet Lodge all three days.

"Everybody was very happy. I think this was a very positive and uplifting event," Jacot said. "There was a good amount of spacing to allow for social distancing, plus there was enough energy and excitement to keep everyone happy."