

Silver State Classic Challenge

Open-road race on closed public highway in Nevada

This information arrived too late for sign-up (by September 1), but if you're in the area, though not really a spectator event, perhaps you can catch some of the buzz, and it definitely is worth knowing about for next year. It's also a reminder that this is a great area to visit, with some great roads.

While most gearheads are not professional athletes, the Silver State Classic Challenge in Ely, Nevada—billed as The Ultimate Race—offers the opportunity to compete at a pro level. This year's event runs from September 14-17 and let anyone to compete in an open-road race on a closed public highway. Hosted by the non-profit Silver State Challenge Inc., the classic race runs on a one-way, 90-mile stretch along Route 318. "You just can't do something like this in any other sport," says White Pine County tourism director, Kyle Horvath. "Anyone who has the cash, a fast ride and a strong nerve can compete. You don't need to be a professional, but you do need to be safe."

There are several different driving class levels depending on the safety features of your vehicle, but participants do not need a race car to compete. The race has hosted all types of vehicles, from EVs to pickups. As long as the vehicle can average 95 mph or higher and meet safety requirements, any driver is welcome to register. Entry fees range from \$200 to \$1,045, depending on vehicle class. The fee includes admission to a weekend packed full of gearhead activities, including a welcome reception, a parade of vehicles and an awards banquet after-party in Ely. All rookie race drivers are also required to attend the event Driving School. For more event information, visit sscc.us.com

ELY, NEVADA: Located about 240 miles from Las Vegas or Salt Lake City, Ely is perfect for people who want to create their own adventures off the beaten path. At the eastern edge of "The Loneliest Highway" (US 50), Ely is a great base camp for some of the best outdoor recreation in Nevada, all year 'round, from mountain biking, climbing and hiking to hot springs. It's also just a short drive to Great Basin National Park, home of the magnificent Lehman Caves and ancient Bristlecone pine forests.

Ely was founded as a stagecoach station along the Pony Express, and its rich history is celebrated in a series of murals that decorate downtown. Visitors can also step back in time on the Nevada Northern Railway, which offers rides in an open-air car through the mountains.

For more information, visit ElyNevada.net. ■

