

Helpful Tips for Planning an Event for your Airstream Club

[last revised by Tess McShane, Feb 25, 2022]

With so many new members joining our clubs, there are bound to be new ideas for rallies in 2022 and 2023. Rally planning is a great way to engage new members! More experienced rally hosts, and club board members are always happy to lend support.

Here is a list of necessary information your Webmaster will need to complete the listing on your club's website as a "save the date".

- Title
- Event Name
- Start and end dates of the rally
- Registration deadline
- If there is an event website – such as for the campground, and especially if you are asking participants to make their own reservations – provide the specific URL. A good idea is to provide a URL to the campground website if they have one.
- A brief event summary – no more than 5 lines
- Location name and street address, state, city, and zip code – this information automatically populates a latitude and longitude on the national map
- Contact Name(s), title (eg. Host, co-host), email(s), and phone number(s) (mobile phone number preferred)

When an event is added to the website by your club's webmaster, it is tagged in a way that it will appear on a map and searchable by date, location, and hosting club.

Completion of a rally coupon/flyer is still important for when all the details are sorted out (an itinerary, kitty fee, meals, etc.), and this can then be added to the listing on the website as well as communicated through club newsletters, emailing's, social media, and any other ways your club choses to share the information.

New to hosting rallies?

Here are a few suggestions for planning of a successful rally:

First, a few definitions –

- Rally: Organized camping event, with planned activities and meals, for a defined period of time.
- Rendezvous: Organized camping event without planned activities or meals, for a defined period of time.
- Buddy Rally or Buddy Rendezvous: Same as above. A member may invite a friend to camp with their "non-Airstream" RV.
- Caravan: Traveling camping experience of varying lengths, designated routes, organized camping stops, meals, sightseeing. Led by a WBCCI certified caravan leader.

Planning a Rally

Expand your rally idea into a date, theme, and location. Contact your club's 1st VP and Webmaster about reserving your date on the current year or next year's schedule. It's never too early to plan, even two years out! Having this information submitted by the Fall business meeting allows your club to develop a calendar. Last minute idea? At least 3 months in advance of the rally is a realistic deadline to get the information to everyone.

Develop an event name, style, and costs so that you can create a registration coupon that will be published in your club's newsletter at least 3 months prior to your event registration deadline. Reach out to the members in your club, club officers, who are experienced with event planning.

Recruit a co-host, as well as volunteers to help with the rally. If you add a checkbox for volunteers to your rally coupon it gives you a list of fellow members you can call on for assistance ahead of time. Remember to ask for help when people arrive at your event if you still need help. Everyone is there to have a good time and a successful rally. Many of your fellow NEAC members have hosted a rally and would be more than pleased to lend a hand. This keeps everyone involved and encourages mingling.

Three important recommendations for any event are:

1. Have a **central gathering spot** that is known by all. The unit tent is a great spot to set up the coffee and host Happy Hour gatherings. If the weather turns for the worse, it will become the grand ballroom of your rally. Ask if your club has a tent and other equipment for use at events. Other options are for the host to reserve a larger site, or if the campground has a pavilion.
2. **Nightly campfires** are still the number one gathering spot for campers. Whenever possible, have a campfire. Almost every campground no longer allows out-of-state wood so add a few dollars to the Kitty Fee to cover buying it from the campground or local vendors.
3. Provide best **on-site contact information for hosts** while attending the rally – mobile phone/text/email – and plan to be available to rally attendees.

Other key items:

1. Distribute a program of events for the weekend, consider literature from the local tourism board on things to do in the area.
2. Hold a "Sidewalk Cafe" the first morning, invite everyone to your gathering spot, serve coffee and talk about the area, make announcements, and discuss what others have planned for the day.
3. Promote themes for decorating, happy hours, meals or the like. These can be promoted prior to the rally via newsletter, emails, or social media.

Developing a Budget:

Campground Costs: Per the campground, include taxes, additional fee for adults, pets, etc. Will you need an additional site for the Unit tent and campfire? Is there a pavilion that needs to be reserved? Additional parking and any other added extras should be included in the total site fees. You can work with the campground manager on these issues since they host large groups all the time. It's OK to ask attendees to reserve and pay in advance for their own campsites as well - many campgrounds are willing to negotiate a discount for rally attendees.

Planned meals - typical budget guidelines: If you are planning on providing Continental Breakfasts (coffee/tea, orange juice, muffins, yogurt, fruit, etc), allow \$2-3 per person. Encourage members to bring their own cups, plates and tableware to each meal thus saving the cost of paper goods. If serving a full breakfast (eggs, pancakes, bacon/sausage etc.) get plenty of help and allow about \$3-5 per person. Your club may have pots and pans, coffee makers, stoves. For a rally supplied dinner allow \$ 5 - 10 per person depending on the menu, and plan accordingly.

Other ideas to consider for meals: Everyone likes coffee or hot water for teas in the morning, it's a great way to bring folks together - very low cost to the host/rally fee, simple and again creates a central gathering place. **Potluck Dinners** are always great fun and help reduce the costs and host's workload. This can be for any meal, breakfast, lunch and dinner. Grill your own and dine together is another fun option - so simple as each rally attendee cooks their own meal back at their site and gathers at the central location for dining. Some members may have dietary restrictions so the "make your own and dine together" option works very well and keeps the work down to a minimum.

Kitty Fees: This additional charge covers incidentals, firewood, decorations, gifts or door prizes along with any other miscellaneous costs. Typically, the average is \$2 - 10 per rig. Again, if you research carefully prior to your event, you should be able to come up with a fair cost!

Pets and extended family:

- Many of our members travel with their extended family so consider information about handicap parking and/ or access to facilities, height and size restrictions of rigs, activities for youth, etc.
- Are pets allowed? Indicate this on your registration form. Some campgrounds don't allow pets or have certain restrictions.

Remember, our clubs are all about having fun while camping together! Hosts are not there to "serve" the other attendees, so don't be afraid to ask other attendees for help.