

Cars flock to Hines Park for annual cruise

Sue Mason, smason@hometownlife.com 7:51 a.m. EDT August 27, 2015



(Photo: Tom Beaudoin)

It was 7 1/2 miles of pure cruiser heaven Sunday as thousands of cars and people packed in Hines Park for the annual Cruisin' Hines car cruise.

A purist's car cruise with only classics and hot rods allowed on the roadway, people packed the park for the event that has continued to grow in popularity since its inception five years ago.

"We easily had people three-four deep along the road from Nankin Mills to Inkster Road," said organizer Don Nicholson. "The number of spectators doubled from last year. They were almost shoulder to shoulder. If I had to guess, and it would truly be a guess, we had 750,000 to 1 million people there."

Cruisers came from Canada and 18 states, including one California resident who came early and did cruise nights and visited the Piquette Factory as a prelude to the cruise. A pre-cruise car show at CrossPointe Church in Wayne was "just packed" and ended with 30-40 cars doing a cruise down Newburgh Road to Nankin Mills,

Nicholson said.

"Everyone that was there (at CrossPointe) was at the cruise the next day," he said. "The place was just packed."

Henry's Field was set up by Nankin Mills and attracted 35 Model A's and Model T's, a "phenomenal number for a car cruise." And cars from popular TV shows like The Monkees, The Munsters and Batman were also on display.

"Henry's Field was good for the first time, but I think it needs to be tweaked a little," Nicholson said.

For a second year, cruisers entered Hines Park off Ford Road in Dearborn with the actual cruise stretching from Outer Drive to Ann Arbor Trail in Westland. The entrance gave a longer approach to the cruise and while volunteers were able to keep cars moving in the morning, backups developed later in the day.

One cruiser in an email to Nicholson, said with cars bumper-to-bumper and cars 18 feet long, there were 3,533 cars going each way on Hines Drive. Another cruiser counted 148 cars on Ford Road waiting to get in.

"We keep the cars moving all morning, but once everyone gets out of church and people wake up, we end up getting hammered about 1 p.m.," Nicholson said. "Our biggest problem is our success. Every time we make a change, it's successful, but it throws up another road."

Cruisin' Hines comes a week after the granddaddy of all cruises, the Woodward Dream Cruise. It's what people want and it's what other cruises live up to," Nicholson said.

"It's what got cruises started and everything else is a copy," he said. "Cruisin' Hines is different because we can control who comes in. People can see a walking and driving car show."

He added Cruisin' Hines is comparable in size to the Dream Cruise and that Michigan is lucky to have these two great events happen here.

"Look at what's happening in Michigan with the D coming back," Nicholson said. "If you're going to continue to do an event and draw the local community, that's fine, but we have to bring in more from the outside. We want to be the Disney World of car cruises."

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