



HISTORY OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN THUNDERBIRD CLUB

The Rocky Mountain Thunderbird club was established in 1980 to encourage and promote the admiration, ownership, care, restoration, preservation and maintenance of all years of the Ford Thunderbird marque. The club's goals were to facilitate the exchange of ideas, knowledge and information as it relates to the Thunderbird automobile. The club was intended to give any and all people interested in the Thunderbird an organization providing the opportunity to meet, socialize and participate in activities with like-minded individuals. The Rocky Mountain Thunderbird Club is a chapter of the Vintage Thunderbird Club International.

The club is managed by a Board of Directors consisting of four officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, as well as up to ten Directors at Large. The Officers and Directors serve alternating two-year terms.

The Charter Members of the club were: Bill Ballas, Leo Bellio, Paul & Jeannie Darcy, Don & Linda Donahue, Harry & Shirley Edwards, Steve & Geri Hatch, Merle & Rose Knauber, Mike & Larae McNierney, Rod Meister, Pete Peterson, John Rein, Don Reinke II and Ron & Karen Theisman.

Past and current Presidents of the club were and are: Don Donahue (1980-81; 1983-84), Pete Peterson (1981-82), Barry Ables (1982-83), Ray McKenzie (1984-85), Rod Meister (1985-86), Bill Hays (1986), Bruce Caswell (1986-87), Mike Aleksick (1987-88), Howie Camack (1988-89; 1994-95), Eldon Hesselius (1989-90), Don Bogaard (1990-92), Mark Allen (1993-94), Tom Dassler (1995-97), John Saylor and Roger Newton (1997-98), John Saylor (1998-99), Gil Rogers (1999-2000; 2002-03), Stan Weiss (2000-02), Don Reinke II (2003 - Present).

The highest honor the club can bestow on one of its members is the John Saylor Award. This award is given each year to the club member who has demonstrated and made outstanding contributions to the club in a given year. This award is voted on by the current Board of Directors of the club. Past honorees are: Cristy Caswell (2001), Laurel Rullman (2002), Don Reinke II (2003), Bruce Caswell (2004), Debbie Spickard (2005), Merle Knauber (2006), Jim Spickard (2007), Bob & Bev Kimball (2008), Glen Bolster (2009), Roger Crawford (2010), Greg Akiyama (2011), Jerry & Pat Potter (2012), Bill Clay and Sheryl Murphy (2013), Jim Merritt (2014), Barb Hendricks (2015), Tom Dassler (2016), Sheri Muehbaurer (2017), Laurie Sarno (2018), Dave Stambaugh (2019), Ernie Tangye (2020), Covid (2021), Cecilia Merritt (2022).

The club has hosted numerous VTCI Regional and International Conventions over the years. The first was an International Convention held in Denver, Colorado in 1989. The next was a Southwest Regional Convention held in Frisco, Colorado in 1994. After that the club hosted a Southwest Regional Convention in Silver Creek, Colorado in 1999, and another Southwest Regional Convention in Cheyenne Wyoming in 2004. We hosted a VTCI International Convention in Colorado Springs in 2008. Our most recent event was a Southwest Regional Convention held in Grand Junction in 2015.

The club has hosted numerous overnight trips for the enjoyment of its club members. Some of the locations for these events in Colorado have been: Boulder, Evergreen, Estes Park, Buena Vista, Ft. Collins, Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, Breckenridge and Durango. We have also travelled out of state to Cheyenne, Wyoming; Deadwood, South Dakota; Santa Fe, New Mexico and Minden, Nebraska.

While the club membership varies from year to year, we can safely say we have well over 100 club members with a total number of Thunderbirds north of 200. The club has remained a vibrant, active organization throughout the years, and looks forward to many more years to come.