



Bandit Run '09 to ride through HS

BY MARK GREGORY
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Fans of the legendary Burt Reynolds trucking film "Smokey and the Bandit" can step back into the days of CBs and Trans Ams May 11 and 12.

Bandit Run '09, a re-enactment of the movie race, which starred Jerry Reed as the Snowman and Sally Field as the runaway bride, will start in Branson, Mo., on May 10 and end in Braselton, Ga., on May 16.

The convoy will leave Branson the morning of May 11 and will arrive in Hot Springs around 3:30 p.m. The vehicles will be on public display at Transportation Plaza until about 6 p.m. May 11. The convoy will depart for Memphis early on May 12.

The show will be free and open to the public.

The Bandit Run began in 2007 as a way of marking the 30th anniversary of the movie, about two truckers who take a bet to deliver a bootleg truckload of 400 cases of Coors beer from Texarkana, Texas, to Georgia in 28 hours.

Steve Arrison, CEO of the Hot Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau, said they learned of the event from the Hot Springs Cruisers Car Club, which was contacted by the Bandit Run organizers.

"We thought it sounded like a fun deal," Arrison said. "We expect a large group to enjoy the 'Run' as it stops in Hot Springs."

The convoy will include 60 cars and a restored Snowman trailer, complete with stagecoach scene, that will be on the road for the first time in 30 years and pulled by a restored 1970s Kenworth, according to the CVB.

"We're trying to put together a little welcoming ceremony, and we've gotten Transportation Plaza reserved so they can display the cars and the truck, and everybody can come down and get their pictures taken and check out all of these muscle cars that have been restored," Arrison said.

The vehicles are all recreations; two of the Trans Ams are Burt Reynolds signature Trans Ams, but were not featured in the film, he said.

"Thousands of Arkansans are fans of the 'muscle cars' and Snowman's trailer as depicted in the 'Smokey and the Bandit' movie," Arrison said.