

The New Management Model for PCA's Porsche Parade

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As a national staff or regional board member, you may have heard that the management of our annual national convention, the Parade, is changing. That rumor is true. The 2009 Parade in Keystone, Colorado will be the last Parade to use the traditional management model. Over the next year we will transition to a new model wherein the National Parade Committee will run PCA's Parades - beginning at the 2010 Parade in St. Charles, Illinois.

The Old Two-Committee System

PCA currently employs two committees to run Parades. The hallmark of past Parades has been the local committee, which is primarily composed of members from the local region, or occasionally several regions, or even an entire zone. This local or "host" committee has had true ownership of the Parade, providing most of the volunteer labor, as well as the direction and flavor of the Parade and its activities. For virtually all events and issues associated with the Parade, the leadership of the local committee established its vision and goals and made decisions on the conduct and execution of the event.

Under this old system, the National Parade Committee provided oversight and

guidance to the host committee. In essence, we were the voice of experience to ensure the success of the event, piloting the local committee through the planning and time it takes to put on a good Parade. While financial success was and is, of course, very important, The National Parade Committee has looked beyond that to ensure that each Parade provided every participant with an enjoyable experience. The task of shouldering this responsibility without micro-managing the local committee is a delicate balance.

Moving forward after 2009's Parade there will only be one committee. The National Parade Committee, which consists of members of the PCA National staff and reports to the Executive Council (EC), will be responsible for the process of identifying and recommending Parade locations for the approval of the EC and planning, preparing and executing Parades. In essence, it will assume the majority of responsibilities that the host committee currently exercises—and YES, that does mean that we will still need the help of many local, Zone and National volunteers to execute a Parade.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Porsche Parade has been the premier event of the Porsche Club of America for more than 53 years. Its concept has been copied by other Porsche clubs and organizations, but its popularity and importance has never been equaled. For one week in the summer, the entire Porsche world turns its eyes to the Parade, and the spotlight is on the chairpersons and committee who run it. Although Parades and Parade management have had their ups and downs, most who attend remember them as fantastic experiences- a week of total Porsche fun and immersion.

In the past ten years, Parades have become increasingly bigger and more complex. The expectation from participants and sponsors alike is flawless presentation and execution. The objective for both the local and national Parade committees in these years has been to meet these expectations and give everyone Parades to remember. Thus Parades have become huge challenges, especially when one considers that it takes years to plan a Parade and it requires a large team of experienced volunteers to make it happen. As a result, many PCA Regions and Zones have decided that hosting Parades is simply too complex and difficult to do well.

Now, into that breach comes PCA National, which has made a decision in the past year that changes the management model of Parades, and, in so doing, has changed the model for Regions' involvement in Parades. Essentially, the National Parade Committee will assume ownership of Parades—from site selection to event management—looking around the country for volunteers to assist.



Why Change?

Why is PCA National making this change? First and foremost, the increase in size and complexity of Parades in the last ten years or so has resulted in an unfortunate consequence, a reduction in the number of proposals or requests to host a Parade. In fact, no proposals were received for either the 2010 or 2011 Parades. This void left us with only one choice: carry on without a host Region using a robust National Parade Committee Staff to run the Parade.

So, although this change may surprise some as being sudden and precipitous, the two-committee system has been gradually evolving in this direction. In the last ten years or so, Parades demanded tremendous time and effort on the part of local committees—most of whom have never managed a Parade and were experiencing these demands and requirements for the first time. Concomitantly, the National Parade Committee has been expanding in size and scope of responsibility to keep pace with these requirements and to assist the local committees on some of the more onerous tasks. (For example, the national positions of Banquet Chair, Goodie Store Chair, and Presentations Chair are all relatively recent additions.)

Thanks to the hard work of the local committee and oversight by the National Parade Committee, Parades have traditionally been very well-run events. Fortunately, most problems at Parade are resolved behind the scenes and are transparent to most Parade attendees.

That said, it makes sense to have an experienced staff in place that has dealt with these problems in the past and can avoid them before they develop into showstoppers. We believe a quasi-permanent, evolving Parade staff can do just that. There is no reason that the Parade should be a reinvention of the wheel each year. If we have greater continuity, reduce the learning curve, and have more consistency, then we can reduce the potential for firefighting and/or resolving recurring problems.

The New Management Model: Goals and Aspirations

As you can see, our hand has been forced from two directions. On the one side is the increasing complexity and size that requires a more professional approach with experienced volunteers. On the other side is a lack of regions interested in shouldering this management burden. Our goal is to create a management paradigm that can move around the country to a new location every year and just fall into that site and make it work. A well-oiled machine, if you will. We are striving to build a multi-year team with a specialist in every major area, someone who knows what to do, can do it correctly and in a timely manner; someone who has the experience to prevent problems, and when mis-steps do occur, can turn it into an action plan so that we avoid them in the future. When problems are avoided and things run smoothly, we can avoid burnout; the volunteers won't be exhausted at the end of the week and will actually enjoy their Parade experience!

Starting in 2010, the management of each Parade will be comprised of experienced club members from around the country, not primarily sourced from Regions close to the Parade location. Our desire is to build a national Parade organization that contains the most talented, experienced individuals in their respective areas, no matter where they might live. Ideally they will be interested in helping for more than one year. While we know we probably won't achieve this goal across the board in the first year, it is still an important goal. It is most important in the critical events, those that have the highest risk or directly affect the success of the Parade. (The events that attendees remember the most.) These are the areas that will directly benefit from having experienced leaders—leaders that already know the potential problems and can avoid them.

To this end, the National Parade Committee has expanded in preparation for 2010 and beyond. PCA's Executive Council has created four new national positions for the Parade: Autocross, Rally, Concours and Registrar. These four areas are obviously critical to the success of the Parade and will round out the committee, complimenting the seven existing positions: Facilities, Banquets, Finance, Presentations, Emcee, Goodie Store, and Committee Chair. You are probably asking yourself, "Where is the fourth big event, the Tech Quiz?" Current thinking is responsibility for that event will be turned over to an existing national committee, the Tech Committee. They specialize in the topic so it seems like a natural fit. Also, the PCR Committee will take responsibility



for the Parade Protest Committee. The Protest Committee is required to consist, in part, of PCR committee members anyway, so it seems like a good fit to have them lead that effort.

Site Selection

In the current model, the local host committee prepares a proposal that includes a potential location and Parade facility (hotel/resort) as well as a break out of their volunteers and their assignments. Integral to the host committee's proposal are their intentions to tailor their Parade, showcasing their local area and providing Parade-goers a flavor of their region.

The new model turns that around. Now the National Parade Committee is actively searching for venues. We will determine the desired area of the country and then seek out and research potential hotels or resorts. Obviously this selection process is quite complicated. We need enough guest rooms, sufficient convention floor space, large banquet facilities, and copious parking. (How many conventions have drive-in delegates? Not many.) We need an autocross venue and a concours venue. Finding all of this in one place is no easy task, especially at a price we are happy to pay. Trust us, site selection has become much more complex over the years because Parades have become much larger and more diverse. More importantly, the expectations from both participants and sponsors are higher than ever. Notice I haven't yet mentioned an important consideration: Is this an interesting place to visit? Will families want to vacation there? Will the local

region be proud to see a national PCA event at that venue? Is this a worthwhile destination? In the new model, the National Parade Committee actively seeks local input, and as we continue to look at venues beyond 2010, we have been including interested parties in the local Region(s) from the beginning of our search. Their opinions and input on the desirability and feasibility of a particular venue are invaluable. Since the arrival of a Parade affects a large area, attending the Zone Presidents' meetings is also a valuable new responsibility for the National Parade Committee chair. Something the size of the Parade needs the support of the Zone, not just a Region or two.

This new model offers a real advantage to smaller Regions. Currently, many Regions consider hosting a Parade to be out of the realm of possibility. The staff needed could be larger than their membership roster. With the new model comes new possibilities: a Parade can come to them, giving them the pleasure and excitement of being the destination for the premier PCA event, without their having to

shoulder all of the responsibilities and workloads. Thus we are increasing the number of potential Parade sites. If you would like to see a Parade in your area, all you have to do is let me know. No longer do you have to worry about planning and managing the event!

Of course, with advantages come challenges. How do we keep the local flavor? How do we avoid Parades being cookie cutter? How do we capture the uniqueness of each area of the country? No doubt each year we will have to recruit locally for interested and excited volunteers who will be willing to assist. We will depend heavily on them for ideas and input, not to mention local visitors bureaus and the hotel's own event-planning staff. Rest assured that the Parade committee recognizes the danger here and is committed to keeping each Parade unique and distinct.

Volunteer Recruitment

The biggest challenge of all, of course, will be the recruitment of volunteers for the Parade staff. The National Parade Committee seeks your help and requests

Volunteer Opportunities

Art Show	Historic Display	Security
Autocross	Hospitality	Signage
Banquets	Kids Activities	Special Events (local area attractions)
Car Wash	Michelin Drive & Compare	Sponsorship
Computers	Paddock	Transportation
Concierge/Parade 101	Parking	Trophies
Concours	Photography	Water/Ice
Driving Tours	Printing	Webmaster
Equipment	Rally	Welcome Tent
Facilities	RC Car Race	Zone Challenge
Gimmick Rally	Safety Inspection	
Goodie Bag	Scoring	

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your region discuss this Region Focus article at your next board meeting. There's a list of Parade positions at the bottom of this article. Our recruitment effort to build the national parade organization is underway. We would like to ask for your help in identifying candidates for these areas. We are looking for interested and active club members who would like to have a large role in helping out with Parade planning and activities. Regular Parade attendees may be the place to start, but anyone who is interested in volunteering and becoming a Parade attendee is welcome to submit his/her name to the National Parade Committee. Don't forget to pass this

request on to your family and friends! Please talk about this with other Region members. I'm sure you know hard working volunteers in your Region, as well as those who attend Parades on a regular basis. Don't be afraid to give us more than one name per position, or names for National Parade Committee positions. All of these areas require several, if not many, volunteers to be successful. Autocross, for example, needs timing/scoring, starters, grid managers, corner work managers, etc. On behalf of the entire National Parade Committee, I look forward to hearing your recommendations.

If you have any questions please feel free to ask. My email address is included, so please use it. Obviously this is a big challenge—but it is an exciting and rewarding one as well. Come join us. Be a part of the biggest, most exciting PCA event of the year!

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