

Large crowd of cruisers expected for annual Hines Drive cruise

Written by Sue Mason Staff Writer
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With attendance doubling over two years, Don Nicholson has every reason to expect the third installment of Cruisin' Hines to be bigger, and definitely better.

The annual one-day cruise of Hines Drive

from Ann Arbor Trail in Westland to Outer Drive in Dearborn will roar to life at 9 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 25. More than 40,000 classic cars – those at least 25 years old – and hot rods – vehicles altered in some way after they left the dealership – are expected to participate.

“The third year is looking phenomenal,” said cruise promoter Nicholson of Westland. “We’re getting more and more calls and we have doubled the number of car

clubs. We had 24 last year and 52 so far this year.”

Hines Drive will be closed to regular traffic from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday for the cruise. In a switch from last year, cruisers must enter Hines Drive off Merriman, north of Warren Road. All spectators can enter at Merriman, Telegraph Road or the Warrendale picnic area in Dearborn Heights.

Few changes

The change for cruisers, who beginning showing up well in advance of 9 a.m., is to cut down on the congestion that developed at Ann Arbor Trail.

“With Ann Arbor Trail two lanes and Farmington and Hines, it was like a funnel,” said Nicholson. “It’s four lanes on Merriman so hopefully traffic will flow a little better. I like the fact that a lot of cars

want to get into the park, but I don’t want the cruise to be known as a traffic jam. I want it to be known as a cool event.”

Nicholson is opting to let the cruisers be the entertainment again this year. The first year, his official cruise band, the Six Foot Poles, had performed, but “everyone had their backs to the stage so they could watch the cars.”

There also will be displays around Nankin Mills by the Model T Complex (the Piquette Factory) where Henry Ford built the Model T, MotorCities National Heritage Area, and Detroit Historical Museum. A Detroit Grand Prix car also will be on display.

Nicholson will be giving cruisers mini “I Cruised Hines Drive” street signs and Cruisin' Hines programs. He has 30,000 programs and eight boxes of the street signs provided by *Cruis'news* Magazine.

There also will be vendors up and down the 7 1/2-mile route.

Nicholson also is looking for 20 volunteers to help with the cruise. They will work at the spectator entrances and at the main gate to let cars in and pass out magazines. Volunteers also are needed to work with the Friends of Nankin Mills in raising money

🔗 to restore a Model T that will put in the museum for children to “get in and out.”

Nicholson is holding a volunteers meeting at 6 p.m. Monday, Aug. 19, at Nankin Mills, Ann Arbor Trail and Hines Drive in Westland. Interested people can also call him at 734-658-5296 for more information.

Big turnout

There's no need to register for

🔗 the cruise, something Nicholson shelved after the first cruise in 2011. He had used the registration to develop a mailing list but discovered it was too costly.

“I expected 4,000 and got 24,371. I couldn't afford the postage,” he said. “I've even discontinued the goodies bags. I discovered people really don't look in them.”

This is the first year Cruisin' Hines is included in Pure Michigan's Autopalooza and is being promoted outside of the state. Nicholson also was at the Woodward Dream Cruise this weekend to promote “all Autopalooza events.”

Nicholson is pleased with the prominence the Hines cruise has achieved in just three years, rating a magazine cover with the likes of the Woodward Dream Cruise and Flint's Back to the Bricks.

“The Woodward Dream Cruise was the inventor of all of this,” he said. “Where would we be without it? Everyone strives to achieve that level.”

For more information about Cruisin' Hines, visit its website, cruisinhines.com, or its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CruisinHines.