



# SIERA News



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## THE PLAN

The Silver State Classic can be defined as a high-speed rally, rather than a race. Perhaps a race against time. 90 miles on Nevada State Highway 318, arriving at the finish line at the exact minute, second and hundredth of a second is what allows you to win your class. I talked to a driver who stated he was 6/10<sup>th</sup> of a second off his mark and came in eighth in his class! Six tenths of a second! I suggested he was pulling my leg, but others in the group confirmed the number. Be a driver, a mathematical genius, a GPS guru and stay on the road. It's one of the more interesting projects with an absolute

requirement for radio operators. Amateur radio is the only communication mode able to maintain continuity from one end to the other.

Three states will allow legal closure of a highway, to be used for purposes other than normal. The Nevada route, between Lund and Hiko, is such a location. Twice yearly the "Silver State Classic Challenge" draws something in the order of 100 to 150 road challengers to Ely.

Many are Z class Corvettes but there are Vipers and 911s and Mustangs and even an occasional truck. Even saw a Elantra out there one time. All vehicles are impeccably maintained and,

during inspection, the owners are constantly using a feather duster to keep the shine. Speed categories run from 95mph to 170mph and then the unlimited, where "fast" is the answer. Mostly though, and even if speed is the fun, the challenge comes by meeting your category over the 90 miles in times of a hundredth of a second. "The Plan" means meticulous attention to every detail, crossing the finish line at the exact moment. There are multiple requirements for the drivers. Suffice to say they are exacting in detail and followed to the letter. Inspections create one of the better opportunities for spectators to crawl around on the cars.

This takes most of the morning and is a show in itself. A not to be missed opportunity to see, talk, drool and imagine. Ely becomes active which, for a farm boy like me, is great fun as well. There's nothin' like a rural town coming alive with excitement. Many of the contestants will participate in a parade down Ely's main street on Friday evening. Barnum and Bailey, it ain't! But it sure is fun.

With 13 checkpoints along the route, NDOT has mandated that ham radio operators be at every one of them. It's not until every checkpoint has called in with an announcement that everything is in order that NDOT will allow a start. Operators are at the checkpoints with red and yellow flags and are a controlling factor if NDOT calls

for caution or a stop in place condition. Radio operators keep track of car sequence and report anything that appears unusual.

Nevada Route 318 is a typical ranch and farm country road. Lots of gates and many dirt side roads. Fact is, there are some 100 gates and access roads along the route. Some of the gates are locked by "gate-keepers" and they also physically man the other gates as well as the roads. There are 60 of these keepers and all are under control of a radio operator, keeping in voice contact with FRS radios. As a radio operator, it's a challenge. Keep records as directed (meaning having knowledge of the car sequences, so nobody gets "lost"), constant contact with NCS and with your local

gate keepers. Busy from setup at 0600, rally start at 0800, through finish. "Finish" can be as soon as noon or as late as 1700, depending on rally car difficulty. Some years it goes like clockwork. Other times an accident can call for a delay and a sweep of the course. All of it is exciting. There's no grandstand or observation area for spectators. The only folks watching the excitement of the smooth running cars, clipping by with a deep throated rumble, are the radio operators and the gate keepers. This is really kuhl stuff.

You can learn more at

[www.sccc.us](http://www.sccc.us)

### **2010 SIERA CALENDAR**

- Aug 7 – Meeting 1pm (SKYWARN Tng)
- Aug 28 – Social Bkfst
- Sept 4 – Meeting 1pm
- Sept 12 – Tour de Tahoe**
- Sept 25 – Social Bkfst