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CALIFORNIA SPORTS CAR CLUB WILL TURN 65 YEARS OLD IN 2015

BUTTONWILLOW, CALIF - California Sports Car Club (Cal Club) will turn 65 years-old in 2015 and today stands as the oldest racing club in California next to the Southern California Timing Association (SCTA) who run their events on dry lakebeds. Cal Club's first organized event was a hill climb in Palos Verdes in 1947, prior to the formal Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of California on March 23, 1950. Credited as the original founders were John Von Neumann, Roger Barlow and Taylor Lucas.

The Club has a rich history producing some of the world's most noted race drivers and the best race volunteers the sport has ever seen. People like Phil Hill, Max Balchowsky, Bob Bondurant, Rick Mears, Dan Gurney, Masten Gregory, Carrol Shelby, Eliot Forbes-Robinson and many many more filled the weekend fields in such places as Palm Springs, Torrey Pines, Paramount Ranch, Pomona Fair Grounds, Santa Barbara, Riverside and even Minter Field now Shafter Airport. Today there are many young talented drivers using Cal Club events as a platform to professional careers.

During the 50's Cal Club was in direct competition with the Southern California Region of the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA), both organizations running a full annual calendar of road racing events. At that time there was a level of arrogance within the SCCA that felt the sport should only cater to the "amateur" driver, where Cal Club virtually welcomed drivers from any level, as the Club does currently with the annual Pacific Road Racing Championships™. As the sport grew it became evident that Cal Club and the SCCA were diluting the Southern California road racing market. In 1961 Lindley Bothwell took the lead and negotiated a merger. The California Sports Car Club then became a Region of the Sports Car Club of America and the charter of the local Region was dissolved.

Race management and the skilled volunteer worker base is what separates Cal Club events from many others. Even though racing in the early era was much more dangerous than today, Cal Club continued to stress safety as they did in 1958 by mandating the use of roll bars, somewhat unheard of at the time. The Club has influenced many positive changes for the sport ever since.

As the decades went by more and more of the Southern California race tracks were disappearing. By the 80's there were only two viable road race courses available, Riverside Raceway and Willow Springs. With the closing of Riverside Cal Club moved forward in 1995 by celebrating the opening of their new race track, Buttonwillow Raceway Park, today a major motorsports complex.



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2015 - 20th Anniversary - BUTTONWILLOW RACEWAY PARK - www.buttonwillowraceway.com

Buttonwillow, Calif. - Cal Club realized a bold step was needed to ensure they'd have a place to race when their home track of Riverside International Raceway was sold to a developer in 1989. A small group of enthusiastic members asked, "why don't we build our own race track? What seemed like an overwhelming idea at the time has panned out to be one of the biggest sports car racing success stories with Cal Club now positioned as majority owners of Buttonwillow Raceway Park.

It was a monumental task but Cal Club members rallied behind the concept of building their own track and voted to add a \$50 surcharge to each race entry plus implementing additional programs that raised funds from members and other sources. The result was outstanding with over \$700,000 generated initially to demonstrate they were serious and committed.

Site selection was next and pivotal for success. With inflated California real estate prices, tough environmental laws in place plus other concerns made it obvious an affordable track would not be built near any major California city. However, Kern County proved to be friendly and eager project participant and embraced the concept. The prime spot turned out to be in the city limits of Buttonwillow, one-half mile off of Interstate-5 at Lerdo Hwy, just 25 miles northwest of Bakersfield and 125 miles north of Los Angeles.

Thanks to five Cal Club member investors, construction financing was secured in June, 1995 and BRP opened six months later. The track design offers over four miles of race surface with over 30 different track configurations. Track designers focused on variety to avoid BRP becoming boring or routine. In fact, racers find the track challenging and very demanding. Additionally the track was designed to run in either direction which allows race organizers to really mix it up.

Today BRP has proven to be a favorite track for most of the race and track day clubs in California. Motorcycles are frequent visitors as the track is renowned for its safety. With expansive runoff areas and few impact zones safety for both drivers and riders is well recognized. The variety and safety has also made Buttonwillow a favorite with professional race teams, media outlets for product testing and manufacturer product introductions. The "Park" has amenities galore, grassy picnic and play areas for families and spectators, three story race control building containing a gift shop, restaurant with indoor seating and viewing area on the second story balcony. The paddock can accommodate 700 cars on pavement and in addition there is a new credit card driven fuel station with very competitive pricing, a tire shop and support businesses.

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