

# MEMORANDUM for Pilots

**From: Balloon Event Team**

**To: Our Balloon Guests/Friends**

**RE: Balloons at Lakeland (LAL)**

**The clock is ticking as we head to SUN 'n FUN! Not much has changed year to year for balloonist, but worth checking out the details below just in case memories falter. An on-line application is in place.....and if you have questions, feel free to ask.**

- 1) **Does it cost to participate?** NO for private balloons, yes for our commercial friends.
- 2) **How BIG is the event?** Bigger and Better! Each year we witness growth and anticipate the largest crowd of our history this year with the Blue Angels as a highlight. Total attendance for the week is typically over 200,000, with Saturday being the biggest day at around 30-40,000.
- 3) **What's included?** You and your crew will be guests of SUN 'n FUN for the entire day of the flight. We will serve a continental breakfast for the pilot and crew chief at the pilot briefing and host an awards celebration lunch at noon.
- 4) **What time should we be at the site?** We suggest arrival at normal ballooning timing---about 6:00 a.m. Briefing will be held promptly at 6:30 a.m. in the FAA building (we are on Daylight Saving—Eastern)
- 5) **After the flight what next? We will advise of parking procedures for the participating balloons and their crew at the briefing. Refueling will continue to be in the lot near GEICO unless directed elsewhere.**
- 6) **Refueling?** Please be patient. As with most of SUN 'n FUN, fuel is offset by donations and sponsors and the pumping is handled by volunteers.
- 7) **What about a night glow?** SNF has scheduled night air shows on Wednesday and Saturday nights so please check the calendar of events for updates. If you are interested in “lighting up your balloon” please advise the Balloon Chairman of your interest at least 24 hours before the event (balloons are usually pre-show 7-8:15 p.m.) There is limited space and the participation will be by INVITATION ONLY---among those stating an interest. Commercial balloons paying the participation fee will be given priority.
- 8) **What about food?** Yep...the show hosts more food vendors than ever....but lunch is on us for pilots that have flown in the event (and their crew---Saturday, of course).
- 9) **Commercial Balloons welcome? Absolutely! We're happy to host our commercial partners. The fee will remain \$500 for the entire event.** It will include a commitment to fly on Saturday morning, participation in evening glows (subject to day-of-event approvals) and early morning flights from a designated area (Tuesday-Friday). All such flights must be with the approval of the Balloon Chairman and must conform to FAA and SNF field operating rules. Commercial pilots that have paid fees will be given priority and allowed up to 3 full-week passes to facilitate early morning flights. Static Display

will be an option based on weather. Checks should be made out to The **SUN 'n FUN Fly In**. Receipts will be mailed after the event including reference/affidavits of your flight.

- 10) **So what's considered Commercial?** We deem a commercial balloon as one that is owned, under lease or operated to the benefit of a commercial corporation doing business in the USA. This does NOT include ride balloons carrying the name of the ride operator. But, it does include all balloons that carry any form of advertising for goods, services, operating business or institutions. There are over 500 vendors at SUN 'n FUN and a large number of sponsors who are paying "big bucks" for marketing and advertising rights at this event---thus the rule.
- 11) **Can my company advertise or own a booth?** If you or our company is interested in a booth---- priorities will be given to Balloon Participants. Fees range from \$1500 to over \$10,000 depending on locations and facilities needed. Most spaces are "sold out" a year in advance, however, inevitable "openings" typically occur as the event nears. Sponsorship and advertising opportunities still exist. Please share any request as soon as possible.
- 12) **Are their exceptions to the Commercial classification fees:** Yes. If the balloon is normally operated within 50 miles of the SUN 'n FUN campus (its home registered location) and is used in normal ride businesses, a commercial fee will not be charged if the envelope contains permanent advertising for a local business. NO "temporary" advertising signs will be allowed without explicit written approval by the Chairman.
- 13) **Special Shapes: SNF welcomes Special Shape Balloons:** The international audience and world press make this a particularly good event to showcase a special balloon. Thus, all special shapes are welcome---and the fees (even if explicitly commercial) will be waived for the balloon participation in 2021---along with the same privileges as all other balloon operations. To qualify for a special shape waiver, the balloon must pre-register and be approved by the Balloon Chairman.
- 14) **Can I get a pass for my 97 year old grand mother in law who is our official chef?** Sorry....we really have to limit the free passes to pilots and immediate crew.....Unless she is a valid crew member, you'll have to pay. Four passes will be issued for each balloon; for larger balloons/crews exceptions can be handled on an individual basis approved by the Chairman.
- 15) **I have a big balloon and it takes five cars to support the crew and the team. Can I get five passes for cars?** You can bring all the cars you want...and parking is free for balloonist and their crews, within the designated lots. If your guests prefer, they can park up close for a modest parking fee in the main lots (\$10 all day)---Please pay and don't push for special rights, as the attendants are volunteers and will not have special policies for balloonists. Note that we don't have room for more than one chase vehicle per balloon at the launch site and at the FAA briefing center. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING EXTRA CARS INTO THE SECURED AREA --they will be turned back.** Carpool to the site, please.
- 16) **What do I do after the field launch with my vehicle---where do I go to exit for the chase?** We will make announcements at the pilot briefing as to the wind direction and the escape routes for cars and people. Post the flight you will be escorted off the field by flight safety/ground operations personnel. Please follow their directions.
- 17) **What do I get for flying?** A lot of fun, an appreciative crowd, loads of press coverage, and a lot of accolades from jealous pilots----plus a flight pin for the day, a gift from SUN 'n FUN, entrance to the facilities for the day for you and your crew, continental breakfast for pilot/chief, lunch for crew and a chance to spend all your money at one of the biggest expositions of aviation suppliers in the country.

- 18) **How do I register?** As with any event of this type, advance registration is preferred. A pilot application, release plus the traditional event Balloon Crew Form is mandatory---[The FAA has become a stickler on pilot qualifications and balloon certification](#). Please check the website for registration and requirements.
- 19) **How about publicity?** This is a huge event. We have been known to have more than 25,000 people milling around when the balloons go airborne at daybreak---there are over 10,000 campers on site! We ask that each pilot fill out their personal balloon information form, so that our announcers can get the “story” right about each balloon and the accomplishments of the pilots. We have over 100 working press members attending each year with representation worldwide! The post event publicity includes hundreds of press mentions in radio, television and all forms of print.
- 20) **What is the qualification to fly?** We appreciate that everyone is anxious to fly, but we do have to respect the FAA rules for event/crowd flights. Remember you start your flight in the FAA building, and our support team includes enough FAA administration/enforcement folks that you simply don’t want to challenge anyone on competency. Please check the FAR’s and be sure that you are qualified. If in doubt---talk to Tom or Jessica Warren personally. You can reach them at [AmericanBalloons@gmail.com](mailto:AmericanBalloons@gmail.com) or 813-243-9507.
- 21) **What are the landing restrictions?** We will cover them at the briefing. There are few major concerns however, there are some “hot spots” just north of the airport where people carry guns and don’t like intruders---government controlled site. Please be sure to ask if you don’t know the territory.
- 22) **What are the prizes for winning?** An unbelievable thank you from SNF staff and a few thousand guests....plus admission to the big event, memories, and, a first, second and third place trophy worthy of your mantle. We frown on plaques....so you never know what is next---but promise to keep it interesting and a true keepsake.
- 23) **Is the Pilot Briefing mandatory?** Well, if you want to fly it is! Gates will open to balloon arrivals between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m. The Briefing facility (FAA Building near airside) will open at 6:15 a.m. and the briefing will be completed rapidly. Please don’t approach the flight line without attending this briefing! If the gates are not open when you arrive, we ask you to form a line off the entrance road until the guards are can offer you a release.
- 24) **How about help....I need crews!** We have a safety-first policy at the balloon launch and we try to hold back unnecessary observers to a set back line about 50 yards from launch areas. However, as Pilot in Command, you are free to recruit from the audience support for launch assistance. We will have Boy Scout and British Aviation Cadets who will be available and assigned to help.
- 25) **What if I have questions that are not covered in the above?** Please contact American Balloons if you didn't find it here. There will also be opportunities for Q & A at the Pilot Briefing on race day. Check out the SUN ‘n FUN Website for more information about the event and the daily schedule. ([www.flysnf.org](http://www.flysnf.org)).