

Informer

NORTHERN COLORADO

INDIAN MOTORCYCLE RIDERS GROUP®

#2036

NORTHERN COLORADO



February 2026

Informer Newsletter

NORTHERN COLORADO IMRG UPCOMING EVENTS

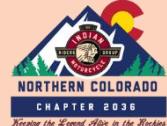
February 14th (Saturday) Ride Planning Session



It's time to start dreaming of open roads. Join us at the **Indian Motorcycle of Fort Collins dealership** **@12:00 pm** for a Ride Planning Meeting. We've collected a few good ride suggestions from several of you already. This is your chance to help shape our 2026 calendar, connect with fellow riders, and ensure we have a season packed with unforgettable miles. Come on out, and let's plot out some epic adventures together!

February 21st (Saturday) Chapter Meeting

Join us for our Northern Colorado IMRG Monthly Meeting at the **Indian Motorcycle of Fort Collins** **@9:30 am**. We'd love to see the showroom floor packed with members! Whether you're a longtime member or new to the Chapter, these meetings are the perfect way to stay connected with the local IMRG community. So come grab a seat, enjoy the camaraderie, and let's keep the momentum rolling – the riding season will soon be upon us!



UPCOMING EVENTS

02/14 Ride Planning Meeting
02/21 Chapter Meeting

RESOURCES

[Going on NoCo IMRG Rides](#)
 Guidance & waiver forms for rides

For up-to-date information on all Northern Colorado IMRG rides and events, visit our [Events Calendar](#).

Please visit, [Going On NoCo IMRG Group Motorcycle Rides](#), for ride waivers, ride level ratings, and other detailed information about going on our group rides.

-  [NoCo IMRG YouTube Channel](#)
-  [NoCo IMRG Instagram](#)
-  [NoCo IMRG Facebook Page](#)
-  [NoCo IMRG Facebook Group](#)
-  nocoimrg@gmail.com
-  [nocoimrg.org \(website\)](http://nocoimrg.org)

[About Northern Colorado IMRG](#)

Saddle Up & See Dinosaurs: The Northern Colorado IMRG Road Trip to Vernal

Last July, several members of the Northern Colorado IMRG took a three day excursion to Vernal, Utah to do some dinosaur hunting.

Day 1: Canyons, Passes, and High-Desert Plains

We met in the Ted's Place parking lot in Laporte. At our designated kickstands-up time, we clunked into gear and merged onto Highway 14 westbound where the journey began at the entrance of the **Poudre Canyon**. There is a unique joy in riding alongside the Poudre River. With the rushing water, twisting roads carved between canyon walls, and the cool, pine scented air, it felt like a perfect symphony of mountain freedom.



[Watch the Day-1 Video to Vernal](#)

As we began a slow climb, we passed through the **Baldwin Tunnel** a short distance from the Mishawaka, a local marvel completed in 1916 that opened the canyon to further passage. We briefly stopped at the **Glen Echo Resort**, a favorite oasis of ours, and then pushed onward in favor of getting some miles behind us.

Our first essential stop was the **Cameron Pass** picnic area. At this high elevation, we took a moment to soak in the spectacular views of the surrounding mountain peaks before beginning our descent to **Walden**.

Into the Basin

The approach to Walden is a stark contrast from riding the Poudre Canyon, going flat and straight across a vast valley floor. After fueling up at the Sinclair station (where we had our first of many dinosaur encounters!), we crossed the intermountain basin of North Park. With the Park Range mountains looming in the distance, we transitioned onto U.S. 40 to tackle **Rabbit Ears Pass**.

Rabbit Ears is exhilarating. While less technical than some of Colorado's other passes, its sweeping curves and open mountain roads make for a leisurely and pleasurable ride. We passed through a busy Steamboat Springs without stopping, eager to reach **Craig** for lunch at **Yampa Valley Brewing**, which was lively with the start of the yearly county fair.

The Land of Giants

West of Craig, the theme of the trip truly began to take hold. We spotted hillside dinosaur statues before stopping in the tiny town of **Maybell** (population 76) to rest. Finally, we reached **Dinosaur, CO**, where the streets bear names like *Brontosaurus* and *Tyrannosaurus*.

The final 35 mile leg to Vernal was a ride through classic high-desert landscape that was open, remote, and under a vast blue sky. We were officially greeted in **Vernal** by the famous big pink dinosaur. After checking into the hotel and a quick dip in the pool, we enjoyed a delicious meal at Lemongrass Thai. 310 miles crushed!

Day 2: Fossils, Forests, and Fault Lines

Sunday morning began with a quick breakfast and a stop at Maverik to top off the tanks. Our mission: **Dinosaurland**.

The Wall of Bones

As we rode toward **Dinosaur National Monument**, the lush greens faded into a sun baked, barren landscape. It felt as if the road was a time machine. Entering on the Utah side near Jensen, we headed straight for the **Quarry Exhibit Hall**.

This is the main event: a massive, enclosed rock face known as the Carnegie Quarry. We stood in awe of over 1,500 dinosaur bones from the Late Jurassic period, left exactly as they were 149 million years ago. Being able to actually touch fossils protruding from the cliff face was a highlight we won't soon forget.

Climbing to the Forest

Leaving the monument, we took a tranquil high-desert back route toward Highway 191, which would take us to Flaming Gorge. As we climbed toward the **Ashley National Forest**, the sagebrush gave way to towering pines and engaging mountain curves. We shared the road with free-range cattle before arriving at the **Flaming Gorge Area**.

We crossed the **Cart Creek Bridge** and the massive **Flaming Gorge Dam** (standing 502 feet high!). After a satisfying lunch at the **Green River Grill** in the Dutch John Resort, complete with a post lunch celebratory "re-energized" dance, we headed back out to explore the geology of the region.

The Showstopper: Sheep Creek Canyon

If the morning was about fossils, the afternoon was about the Earth itself. We rode the **Sheep Creek Canyon Geological Loop**, which follows the **Uinta Fault**. Towering rock walls and exposed strata showcased 800 million years of history forced into incredible positions. It was awe-inspiring and far surpassed our expectations.

We completed the loop and retraced our path south on Highway 191, giving us a fresh perspective on the mountain curves as we headed back to our base camp in Vernal.

Wrap Up

Day 2 was a masterclass in prehistoric beauty and rugged riding. From touching Jurassic history to carving through ancient canyon faults, it was a day for the record books.



[Watch the Day-2 Video: Exploring Vernal](#)

Day 3: Homeward Bound

On day three, we turned our bikes toward home, carrying the spirit of the "Saddle Up & See Dinosaurs" ride with us. We had such an awesome time, and really weren't ready to come home yet. We retraced the same route that we came in on, only we travelled a bit slower to prolong the trip for as long as possible.

Navigating the Peaks: Guide to Rocky Mountain National Park Fees and Passes

Planning a trip to Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) is an unforgettable experience, but before you hit Trail Ridge Road, you need to navigate the logistics of entrance fees. With updated pricing and new benefits for motorcyclists taking effect in 2026, staying informed is the key to a stress-free entry.

Here is everything you need to know about the costs of entering one of America's most iconic parks.

1. Standard Entrance Fees (The Basics)

If you are visiting for a day or a week and don't have an annual pass, you will likely purchase a standard entrance permit. These are available at park gates or online via [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

- 1-Day Vehicle Pass: \$30.00 (Valid for the day of purchase).
- 7-Day Vehicle Pass: \$35.00 (Valid for seven consecutive days).
- 1-Day Motorcycle Pass: \$25.00 (Admits up to 2 motorcycles with up to 4 total people).
- 7-Day Motorcycle Pass: \$30.00 (Admits up to 2 motorcycles with up to 4 total people).



2. Annual and Lifetime Passes

For frequent visitors, an annual pass is the most cost-effective option. A major update for 2026 makes these passes even more valuable for motorcyclists.

The "Two-Motorcycle" Rule: Starting in 2026, all America the Beautiful passes now cover two motorcycles per pass. This is a significant change from previous years and allows two motorcycles to enter together under a single pass.

- RMNP Annual Pass: \$70.00. Provides unlimited entry to RMNP for one year.
- America the Beautiful Pass: \$80.00. Covers entrance to all 2,000+ federal recreation sites.
- America the Beautiful Senior Pass: \$20.00 (Annual) or \$80.00 (Lifetime). Available to U.S. citizens 62 or older.
- Access Pass: Free. For U.S. citizens with permanent disabilities.
- Military Pass: Free for active duty, veterans, and Gold Star families.

RMNP Annual vs. America the Beautiful: Which should you buy?

Since both the RMNP-specific pass (\$70) and the America the Beautiful pass (\$80) cost almost the same, you might wonder which to choose.

Choose the RMNP Annual Pass if you want to support this park directly. Typically, 80% to 100% of the revenue from site-specific passes stays within RMNP to fund repairs, upgrades, and maintenance.

Choose the America the Beautiful Pass if you plan to visit any other national park or federal site (like Arches, Yellowstone, or local US Forest Service trailheads) within the next year. It offers the best overall value for travelers.

3. Don't Forget: The Timed Entry System

Regardless of which pass you hold, if you visit between late May and mid-October, you will likely need a Timed Entry Permit Reservation.

- Cost: \$2.00 (non-refundable processing fee).
- Options: You must choose between "Park Access" (excluding Bear Lake Road) or "Park Access + Bear Lake Road."
- Requirement: This is required in addition to your entrance fee/pass.

4. The RMNP Commuter Permit (Special Access)

The Commuter Permit is a highly specialized pass that is not an option for most visitors. It is specifically designed for local residents who routinely travel through the park to get between connecting towns on the East and West sides.

- Is it right for you? Unless you are a local who needs to go between towns such as Estes Park and Grand Lake for work or essential services, this permit is likely not useful.
- No Recreational Benefits: This permit carries strict limitations. You are forbidden from stopping anywhere in the park. This means no pulling over for photos, no parking at trailheads, and no wildlife viewing. If a ranger sees you parked or stopped with a Commuter Permit, you may be cited.
- What is it? A permit allowing non-stop transit via Trail Ridge Road (U.S. Highway 34).
- Cost: \$80 "administrative" fee.
- Validity: Valid for two years.
- Who is eligible? Only permanent residents of specific nearby towns (e.g. Estes Park, Grand Lake, Lyons, Loveland, Fort Collins, etc.). You must provide a valid Colorado driver's license with an eligible address to apply.
- Timed Entry: It waives the need for a Timed Entry Reservation, but only for the purpose of non-stop commuting.

Safety Tip: "The Threat From Behind"

A Safety Tip From Paul Carroll



Over the years, I have seen many riders let their situational awareness diminish as they are stopped at a red light. However, being stationary doesn't mean you're safe. The primary threat is behind you when you are stopped. Until the vehicle behind you has come to a complete stop, your focus belongs in your mirrors.

Follow these "stopped-safety" protocols:

- **Stay Ready:** Keep the bike in gear with your right hand or foot on the brake.
- **Be Visible:** It's a good practice to pulsate your brake light as traffic approaches from behind to ensure you are seen.
- **Leave an Out:** Maintain enough distance from the vehicle ahead of you to allow for an emergency escape maneuver if approaching traffic is not going to stop.
- **Look at Traffic:** Don't just casually glance in your mirrors. The key here is to really look at the traffic in your mirrors.
- **Focus First:** Do not adjust your radio, or grab your water bottle until the traffic behind you is at a stop.

Pro Tip: To sharpen your focus, an easy technique to practice your attention to detail is to determine the color of the vehicle as it approaches and repeat it back to yourself out loud. This keeps your brain locked into your surroundings, and forces you to process the threat rather than just seeing it.

Canyon Carving & High-Country Camaraderie: Durango Rendezvous

There is a kind of magic that happens when the early morning mist lifts off the San Juan Mountains and the first few motorcycles begin to fire up in the Sky Ute Casino parking lot. If you're a fan of two wheels, open roads, and the smell of ponderosa pine at 10,000 feet, you likely already know about the Durango Rendezvous.

While the Southwest is home to many rallies, the Durango Rendezvous (held annually in June) has carved out a unique reputation as a "rider's rally." It's less about the chrome-polishing and bar-hopping of typical biker rally and more about exploring the surrounding beauty while riding on two wheels, and the camaraderie with those who share a passion for two wheels.



All Brands, One Road: An Inclusive Spirit

A common misconception is that you need an "Indian" badge on your tank to join the fun. That couldn't be further from the truth. While the event's heritage is deeply rooted in the Indian Motorcycle community, the "Rendezvous" spirit is defined by inclusivity.

Whether you are riding a Harley-Davidson, a BMW adventure bike, a vintage Honda, or a custom Ducati, you are welcomed with open arms. The event may primarily celebrate Indian Motorcycles, but it prioritizes the rider. You'll see all kinds of bikes from heavy baggers to nimble sport-tourers cruising together through the Colorado passes.

A Heritage Reborn in the San Juans

Established in 2015, the Durango Rendezvous was originally conceived as a destination experience for the Indian Motorcycle Riders Group (IMRG). Today, it has evolved into an annual gathering of riders that remains the heartbeat of the Southwest riding season.

The event is headquartered out of the Sky Ute Casino Resort in Ignacio, Colorado, just a short cruise from downtown Durango. This location serves as the perfect "base camp" for what many consider the best riding in North America. The resort provides ample space for vendors, demo rides, and the nightly gatherings that define the event.

The Main Attraction: The Million Dollar Highway

You don't come to Durango to sit in a parking lot. You come for the Million Dollar Highway.

As part of the San Juan Skyway, the stretch of US-550 between Silverton and Ouray is legendary. With no guardrails, hairpin "S" curves, and sheer drops that will make your heart skip a beat, it is a rite of passage for every serious motorcyclist. During the Rendezvous, you will see a diverse parade of bikes carving through these high-altitude passes.

Iconic Routes of the Rendezvous:

- **The Silverton Run:** A classic ascent into the historic mining town for lunch and high-altitude air. The town itself feels like a movie set, with unpaved side streets and plenty of motorcycle-only parking.
- **Mesa Verde Loop:** A ride through history into the ancient cliff dwellings of the Ancestral Puebloans. The sweepers leading up into the park are some of the most overlooked technical roads in the region.
- **The Four Corners Monument:** A flat-out desert run to the only place in the U.S. where four states meet. It's a contrast to the mountain passes, offering long vistas and open throttles.
- **Telluride via Dolores:** A sweeping, scenic route through the Lizard Head Pass that offers a more relaxed but equally stunning alternative to the white-knuckle turns of US-550.

More Than Just the Ride

While the open road of the San Juans is the draw, the social schedule is what turns strangers into friends. Other staples include:

- **The Durango Rendezvous Banquet:** The grand finale of the week. This formal, yet fun gathering, is where the community celebrates the miles covered, shares a gourmet meal, and enjoy various ceremonies.
- **Indian Motor Works Open House:** A visit to see some of the finest vintage Indian restorations in the country. Even if you ride a different brand, the mechanical craftsmanship on display here is universally respected.
- **Bar-D Chuckwagon:** A night of traditional Western food and music that captures the soul of Colorado. It's a family-style experience that reminds you why this region is so iconic.
- **The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad:** A chance to rest the legs and see the Animas River canyon from the perspective of a vintage steam engine—a view you simply can't get from the road.

Pro-Tips for the High Country

Riding in the San Juans is a unique challenge. The air is thin, the weather is unpredictable, and the views can be distracting.

- **Hydrate:** Altitude sickness can ruin a ride. Drink more water as you think you need.
- **Layer Up:** It can be 85 degrees in Durango and 45 degrees at the top of Red Mountain Pass.
- **Mechanical Readiness:** Ensure your motorcycle is mechanically sound before attempting these passes. You'll be doing a lot of braking, shifting, and leaning into curves. Your motorcycle needs to be in top shape for the technical challenge of the roads.
- **Eyes on the Road:** The scenery is world-class, but the Million Dollar Highway demands 100% of your attention. Don't let sightseeing distract your focus on the road. Use the designated pull-outs to stop and take photos safely.

Looking Ahead

The next Durango Rendezvous is already on the horizon. If you're planning to go, remember that this isn't just a trip, it's a feast for your soul. Between the "Family Reunion" atmosphere and the world-class twisties, it's easy to see why riders return to this corner of Colorado year after year.

Ready to roll? Pack your layers, check your tires, and get ready for some of the best summer riding the Southwest.

For registration details and the full event schedule, visit DurangoRendezvous.com.

125 Years: Inside Indian Motorcycle's Anniversary Celebration at the Petersen

There are few places in the world that command the same reverence for mechanical history as the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. This past January, its revered halls filled with iconic automobiles and motorcycles, became the epicenter of American motorcycling history.

Indian Motorcycle, America's first motorcycle company, officially kicked off its 125th anniversary celebration with a high-octane evening that looked as much toward the future as it did the past.

The "Never Finished" Philosophy



2026 Chief Vintage

The theme of the night was "Never Finished." It's a bold statement for a brand that saw its original Springfield factory lights go dark in 1953, only to be resurrected and refined into the powerhouse it is today.

Mike Kennedy, the newly appointed CEO under the Carolwood LP era, stood alongside Nate Secor (Director of Marketing) to address a crowd of enthusiasts, historians, and media:

"The pursuit of innovation that drove our founders continues to drive us today. The 'Never Finished' campaign isn't just a celebration of our history; it's a commitment to our riders that we are always innovating, always competing, and always pushing forward."

A Star-Studded Night

The guest list was a "who's who" of V-twin culture and Hollywood gearheads. Walking through venue, you couldn't miss William Macy, actor from Wild Hogs, chatting with fans about motorcycles.

Nearby, freestyle motocross legend and master builder Carey Hart was seen showing off Pink's (his wife) custom Scout.



Tyler Hubbard

Design Director Ola Stenegård along with several design engineers on his team were in the crowd answering questions about the new Indian Motorcycle designs, particularly the newest big reveal. Other custom bike builders were also seen roaming about.



Adding to the competitive energy were members of the Bagger Racing series such as Tyler O'Hara, Hayden Gillem, and Rocco Landers. Rocco was particularly excited about the Indian Motorcycle partnership with Vance & Hines.

Pat Cornell (Vroom Old Man) was on hand talking with folks about his 145,000 miles in 145 days (originally 125K miles in 125 days) trek raising money for Myotonic Dystrophy. And of course he came to the event on Pappy, his 2025 Indian Pursuit that he's been riding all this time.

The Star of the Show: The 2026 Indian Chief Vintage

The centerpiece of the event was the global unveiling of the 2026 Indian Chief Vintage. While the modern Indian lineup has leaned heavily into aggressive, performance oriented designs like the Scout, Challenger, Sport Chief, and Springfield, the Vintage is a throwback to the 1940s.

Key Design Elements Observed:

- The Iconic Fenders: Ola Stenegård noted that the team spent "endless tries" to get the single-piece metal valanced fenders just right.
- A Modern Heart: Underneath the 1940s inspired silhouette is the Thunderstroke 116 V-Twin, delivering 120 ft-lbs of torque.
- Legacy Tech: Despite the wire-spoke wheels and lit headdress ornament, the bike features a 4-inch RIDE COMMAND touchscreen disguised as a traditional analog gauge.

Tyler Hubbard Brings the House Down

To top the evening off, Tyler Hubbard, country superstar and avid rider took the stage. The energy was high as Hubbard performed hits like "5 Foot 9" and "Cruise," interspersing his songs with stories of his own time on two wheels. It was the perfect bridge between the heritage of Indian Motorcycle and the high energy future of the brand.



1940s Chief

Final Thoughts

Hosting the event at the Petersen wasn't a random choice. The museum's current "American Motorcycle" exhibit provided the perfect backdrop, featuring rare Indian motorcycles, and other machines that defined a legacy era. The 2026 Chief Vintage parked just feet away from its old heritage ancestors highlighted a rare continuity in American design. It wasn't just a product launch, it was a family reunion where the rebels and pioneers of the early 1900s met the engineers of the 21st century.

One thing was clear, though. Indian Motorcycle isn't interested in being a museum piece. They are reclaiming the "vintage" aesthetic with modern performance and the backing of a new independent era, and are proving that a 125-year-old story is still very much being written.

Ride, Seek, and Explore!