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Great Bend celebrates new SRCA Dragstrip completion

City, Chamber ribbon cutting



Lane 5 of the new SRCA dragstrip is pictured.

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The City of Great Bend and Great Bend Chamber of Commerce will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Sunflower Rod and Custom Association (SRCA) Dragstrip, located at 9951 B-29 Way, on Thursday, May 14 from 3-4 p.m. to celebrate the completion of the fully reconstructed drag racing surface and new timing tower.

“This project is a major milestone for the SRCA Dragstrip and the City of Great Bend,” said City Administrator Logan Burns. “We took a historic facility with deep roots in drag racing and made a significant investment to ensure it remains a premier racing destination for years to come. With a completely rebuilt racing surface, new timing tower and one of the flattest tracks in the nation, we’re excited to officially welcome racers and fans back to Great Bend.”



The SRCA

dragstrip features a new timing tower.

The public is invited to attend and get a first look at the revamped upgrades. It will be an open-house style format, allowing attendees to explore the facility prior to the start of the racing season.

In a complete overhaul of the previous track, the old surface was demolished and rebuilt with pavement installed by slip-form paving by Emery Sapp & Sons. Bartlett & West played an integral role in the design and construction of the project, helping bring the SRCA Dragstrip reconstruction to fruition. In addition, Kurt Johnson with Total Value Concepts completed the final track texturing, resulting in one of the flattest drag racing surfaces in the nation while also providing the long-term durability necessary to withstand ongoing track preparation and racing operations.

In addition to the track surface, the project also included construction of a two-story timing tower and installation of a new timing system. The timing tower was designed to modernize race options, enhance timing capabilities, improve race management and increase media visibility.

This \$5.9 million project was the most significant investment in the history of the SRCA Dragstrip and reflects the City of Great Bend's commitment to supporting recreation, tourism, economic growth and quality-of-life amenities.

A historical landmark in the racing community, the SRCA Dragstrip hosted the first-ever National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) National Event in 1955. That inaugural event drew 219 cars and approximately 15,000 spectators to Great Bend where it continued to be hosted for the next four years. Today, it continues to serve as an important Midwest designation for motorsports and brings thousands of visitors across Kansas and neighboring states to Great Bend.

This ribbon cutting celebrates both the history of drag racing in Great Bend and the future opportunities these improvements will create for the community.

Racing begins Friday, May 15

Races are scheduled throughout the months of May to October at the dragstrip, including the first and last stops of Rocky Mountain Race Week in early June, as well as the NHRA 75th Anniversary Hot Rod Heritage Series on July 3-4.

Next week features Test and Tune Grudge on Friday, May 15, and Summit Points Race No. 2 on Saturday, May 16. Friday gates open at 6 p.m., with Test and Tune from 7:30-11 p.m. Admission is \$5 per person. Saturday gates open at noon and time trials start at 2 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person. Children age 12 years and under are free with paid adult.

The full SRCA Dragstrip 2026 schedule will be published in Tuesday's *Great Bend Tribune*.

Contributors

The City of Great Bend expressed thanks to the many individuals, organizations and contractors whose time, expertise and dedication helped bring the SRCA Dragstrip back into operation: Great Bend City Council, Bartlett & West, City of Great Bend staff, SRCA, Larry Crispe (Bandimere Speedway), Nick Duty (National Hot Rod Association), Emery Sapp & Sons, Eakin Enterprises, Amerine Utilities, Shawn's Foundations, Bartz Construction, LLB Plumbing, Rubes Inc., Jimlos Glass, Harbinger Concrete, TL Steel, Guthrie Construction, High Plains Roofing, Jaguar Electric, Kurt Johnson (Total Value Concepts), Bob Brockmeyer (Compulink), Cillessen & Sons, Kansas Cutting and Coring, Kaw Valley Engineering, Ernie Schrader, Matt DeAmbrosia, Larry Mott and many others who contributed throughout the project.