

Sold out Burning Man sparks quest for tickets

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

One might think the high winds, scorching heat, chilling overnight lows or remote location would be enough to keep people away from Burning Man.

But for the first time in its 25-year history, Burning Man's organizers were forced last month to announce that tickets for the counterculture event were sold out.

Even the guy who wrote the book on Burning Man was caught off guard.

"I didn't have my ticket," said Brian Doherty, author of 2005's "This Is Burning Man."

"I know they said that it could happen, but nobody expected something that has never happened before, to happen. Every single one of us should have planned ahead."

The ticket shortage has triggered a scramble for them by some, scalping by others and concern over what the appropriate size of the event should be.

Ticket sales were not allowed to grow this year because of a permitting issue with the federal Bureau of Land Management, which manages the Black Rock Desert playa where the annual festival takes place.

With its old permit lapsing, event organizer Black Rock City LLC was given a one-year permit to continue operating while a new agreement undergoes environmental study. Instead of receiving its usual 6 percent growth allotment, the organization was required to remain at its 2010 population – approximately 50,000 people.

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