

# Millions of dollars from Burning Man pour into Nevada's economy

By Ben Miller, Reno Gazette-Journal

Every year, a caravan made up of tens of thousands of people swarms the Reno area and heads north to create a small metropolis for a week with the Burning Man festival. But to suddenly create a city, its citizens need supplies – and the acquisition of supplies has a far-reaching and diverse effect on the economies of Reno, Sparks and other cities in Northern Nevada.

Mary Simmons, former chairwoman of the Reno Chamber of Commerce, said burners spend about \$10 million in the area in the weeks before, during and after the event.

Brian Kulpin, spokesman for Reno-Tahoe International Airport, said the airport receives about 15,000 people from more than 30 countries for Burning Man.

“You realize how much they need out there in the desert for a week or 10 days, and they buy a lot of that in our community,” Simmons said.

The impact goes beyond the supplies burners purchase before they drive into the desert, she said.

Organizers donate to local entities as well. According to the Burning Man website, the group donated a 90-kilowatt solar array to Gerlach High School in 2007 that saves the school about \$20,000 a year.

Another group that benefits from donations is the Reno Bike Project. Every year, Burning Man organizers pick up between 700 and 1,000 bikes off the playa after the event ends, said

Noah Silverman, co-founder of the project. This year, they donated 500 of those bikes to the project so they could fix them up and sell them for cheap to burners on a budget.

“It’s basically our biggest fundraiser of the year,” Silverman said. “We expect to raise about \$25,000.”

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