THE RENO TAHOE WGC HALL OF FAME DINNER

**Olympic City:** Reno Tahoe  
**Country:** United States  
**Edition of the Games:**  
Squaw Valley 1960 Olympic Winter Games

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**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

**Annual since 2011**  
**Locals**  
**www.renotahoewintergames.org**  

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The Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition International Hall of Fame Dinner is an annual event which celebrates the Olympic heritage and status of the Reno Tahoe region.

The Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition (RTWGC) is a non-profit organisation that celebrates and promotes the Olympic heritage and status of the Reno-Tahoe region. The Coalition was created from the previous Reno Tahoe Winter Games Organizing Committee, another non-profit organisation which itself was born out of the hosting of the 1960 Winter Olympic Games in Squaw Valley.

The Coalition’s marquee event is the International Hall of Fame dinner which is held every year. The dinner celebrates the induction of new individuals into the Hall of Fame, recognising contributions from community residents that have made a particularly outstanding contribution to sport and the Olympic movement, both locally and on a wider scale. Young and upcoming talents are also awarded for their achievements throughout the year while special recognition is paid to persons who have displayed acts that are in pursuit of the Olympic values of friendship, excellence and respect.

As well as honouring specific individuals, specific tribute is paid to the broader Olympic status of the region, in particular the role it played in the hosting of the 1960 Games, its involvement in other candidate city bids and the development of interest in bringing the Games back to the region in the future.

The Coalition has gone from strength to strength and continues to play a central role in discussions about someday bringing Olympic competition back to the region. The annual dinner has become a feature of the sporting calendar and welcomes the major players in regional sport including government officials, local businesses and athletes. The event has become an important fundraising source for the continued operations of the organisation.
OBJECTIVES

Promote social and constructive behaviour

The RTWGC specifically singles out the Olympic values as the core ideals in what they are trying to achieve for the region. One of the highlights of the International Hall of Fame Dinner is the recognition of local community members who have gone beyond their call to promote the development of sport in the region. These individuals are specifically acknowledged on the night itself, but also in the local media and on the organisation's website, showcasing them as role models and ambassadors for the Olympic values across the Reno Tahoe region.

Promote the City by leveraging its affiliation with the Olympic Movement

Prior to the first Hall of Fame Dinner held in 2011, the region had no central focal point or physical gathering through which to celebrate its Olympic heritage. There was no tangible recognition of the Legacy of the 1960 Games or the role that the region had played in the story of the Olympic movement. The annual dinner provided a wonderful opportunity for residents to relive the magic of the 1960 Games, generating a sense of pride in themselves and in the region. It is also a reminder to the rest of the country and to the world Reno Tahoe is still very much a part of the Olympic discussion and that increased future involvement remains on the radar.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Internal & External Stakeholders

Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition
City Mayor
Local politicians and political parties
Local sport clubs
Local athletes
Local private business
Commercial partners

Finance and Cost

The costs of the annual dinner (including the whole preparation) amounts to around US$ 40,000. The event brings approximately US$ 75,000 in revenue.
Use of the Olympic Brand

While there are no specific Olympic branding elements incorporated into the event, there is a heavy Olympic flavour to proceedings. The RTWGC as an organisation traces its beginnings back to the Olympic Games and many local Olympic heroes are used in the marketing and promotion of the event.

Human Resources and Time

Planning and delivery of the Hall of Fame Dinner takes place over a 9–10-month period. The first three months involve the formation of the planning committee while the remaining 6–7 months are dedicated to logistics planning and operations.

EVALUATION

Every year, the success of the Dinner is discussed by the organising committee in the aftermath of the event. The feedback, attendance and financial results of that year’s events are compared to previous years and media coverage is assessed to gauge the awareness of the event within the local community.

KEY CHALLENGES

Increasing the size of the event

The population of the Reno Tahoe region is quite small and the resort that hosted the 1960 Games was the smallest ever to host Winter Olympic competition. While the ambition and motivation of the organisers can rival any other city or region in the world, this presents some limitations in terms of growing the event. As the event is so highly received by the local community and is such a vital source of funding for the RTWGC, growth is clearly a desired objective and so these limitations present a continuous challenge.

The organisers have sought to address this by partnering with local media to generate greater awareness of the event. They have also noticed that some years see increased numbers around changes in related circumstances, such as discussions on a potential future bid or an upcoming Games for example, a fact that they have used to their advantage.

Picking a suitable date

The region is lucky enough to have a successful and well-supported college American football team. As a large number of the population – and even more of the local sports community – are season ticket holders for the team, often organisers found that the event clashed with home games during the college football season. Furthermore, the schedule for the games was released after the preliminary date set by the organising committee for the Hall of Fame Dinner.

The RTWGC have responded to this uncertainty by introducing flexible dates for the event. Based on the feedback received from the local community, the date for the dinner was moved from its original October placeholder to earlier in the year,
usually in April. This coincided with a less clustered and competitive schedule for local sports events.

KEY LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Differentiate from the outset

There are many other awards and hall of fame-style events at different universities and sporting institutions at all levels across the region. As a result, it is absolutely critical to clearly differentiate the RTWGC Hall of Fame Dinner in terms of its brand values from the very beginning. This means being strict in the application of the recognition criteria and being limited in the number of calibre of awards that are handed out. This helps to increase the perception of the RTWGC offering as a high calibre and prestigious event, aligning it to the attributes of the Olympic movement. This approach is extended to only awarding the most deserving individuals but who can also confirm attendance at the event.

Involve the public in selection

Through partnerships with local media, the organising committee openly invited the public to submit suggestions for nominations for each upcoming Hall of Fame Dinner. While the ultimate decision on who was to be awarded remained with the judging panel, this helped to create a sense of community buy in to the project as well as generate increased media coverage and public awareness. It had the further benefit of heightening the perception of the eventual winners as role models within the community, as well as increasing the sense of achievement and fulfilment within the nominees in light of the fact the public singled them out specifically for recognition.

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