



**Greater Zion Welcomes OHV Enthusiasts for
7th Annual Trail Hero Event Oct. 3-8**

*Growing Event Generates Charitable Funds and More Than \$12 Million
in Economic Impact to Washington County*

St. George, Utah – Sept. 27, 2022 –Sand Mountain is the home of one of the largest off-highway vehicle (OHV) events in the United States as the 7th Annual [Trail Hero](#) is set to take place Oct. 3-8 at [Sand Hollow State Park](#).

“Our event really started seven years ago with the idea of providing motorized access to public lands for people with special needs and veterans,” said Rich Klein, founder of Trail Hero. “The event also raises awareness on the importance of advocating for public lands and continuing to provide access for people such as wounded warriors and children and adults with special needs who may have difficulty getting to some of the beautiful places in southern Utah. Over the last six years, we’ve provided access to more than 1,000 special needs riders and over 4,000 veterans.”

This year, Klein expects have more than 500 veterans and approximately 40 local children from Valley Academy Charter School and Red Rock Center for Independence participate in Trail Hero. More than \$120,000 in charitable proceeds were raised in 2021 with funds benefitting organizations such as the BlueRibbon Coalition, Utah 4 Wheel Drive Association, Hero For a Day, 4Wheel to Heal and more.

Besides direct benefit to individuals and organizations, the event generated more than \$12 million in economic impact to Washington County last year and attracted attendees from 49 states and countries such as Canada, Mexico, Israel and Japan. This year, event organizers are expecting a record 4,500 off-road vehicles and 33,000 people.

The main focus of the event is a series of guided trail rides for anyone who has a four-wheel vehicle such as a Jeep, ATVs, rock crawlers and more to experience Sand Mountain. Veterans and people with special needs participate in these drives to experience the beauty of the mountain and access a part of Southern Utah that might not be as easy to experience.

Beyond trail rides, the event includes a golf tournament, music festival, rock crawl event, celebrations and more – all staged around Sand Mountain, which offers more than 15,000 acres of perfectly sculpted dunes, legendary trails and technical rock

crawling. The music festival is new this year, a demonstration of how Klein and his team continually look for ways to enhance the event. Trail Hero Music Fest will happen Oct. 6-8, featuring headliners Darryl Worley, Colt Ford and Filter.

“Events like Trail Hero are an important component to the variety of experiences here and they provide a significant boost in economic impact to our community,” said Kevin Lewis, director of the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office. “Trail Hero brings in visitors from all over the world to experience the beauty of Sand Mountain and Sand Hollow State Park. The event has so many positive attributes, including the personal connections and opportunities it provides for people with special needs and veterans in the region.”

Klein was inspired to start Trail Hero by his experiences on the Rubicon Trail in northern California. “Off roading is a generational activity,” said Klein. “I grew up in the industry and realized that the narrative of keeping lands open for generational purposes was an important issue. I used to work with Disabled Sports USA taking kids on the Rubicon for overnight trips and realized we were taking for granted how these kids could access such a beautiful and difficult-to-reach area. As I got further into the industry, I realized I wanted to impact this community.”

When Klein moved to the area more than two decades ago, he realized he could recreate some of these experiences on Sand Mountain. According to Klein, the off-roading community knew about Sand Mountain, but he saw the opportunity to bring more awareness to all that was happening in the Greater Zion region related to access to and visibility of public lands, while providing a service to people with special needs.

Trail Hero has also helped a worldwide audience understand and appreciate the vast OHV offerings in the area. Over the event’s seven-year history, OHV-oriented businesses have moved to the region to help support this growing recreational culture. It has become a foundational industry for the economy.

“Since I started Trail Hero, we’ve seen between 20 and 25 different four-wheeling businesses move to the area,” added Klein. “Everything from fabrication shops to racing shops have opened since we started the event. Businesses like Sand Hollow Off Road and Red Desert Off Road are just a few that have opened as the OHV culture has grown over the last few years.”

“Sand Hollow has gotten large enough to sustain and maintain more off-roading businesses,” added Klein. “There was a need for more off-roading businesses and several entrepreneurs relocated to meet this need.”

“Events like Trail Hero have long-term economic impacts that go well beyond the five-day event,” added Lewis. “Trail Hero is just one example of an event that has inspired businesses to relocate to the region, adding to the economic engine of Washington County through job creation, generation of tax revenues and investment in resources that enhance the quality of life here.”

For information on Trail Hero, visit TheTrailHero.com.

About Greater Zion

Located in the southwest corner of Utah, Greater Zion is a destination that offers more than 2,400 square miles of adventure and inspiration. Zion National Park, the fourth most visited National Park in the United States, is the premier attraction, but Zion is only the beginning. Four state parks and a multitude of year-round recreational lands set the stage for a burgeoning mountain biking scene, some of the best off-highway vehicle riding in the country, scenic and challenging play at 13 top-rated golf courses, world-class cultural performances at Tuacahn Center for the Arts and so much more. The vibrant communities of St. George, Springdale, Hurricane, Ivins and towns in between offer a wide range of lodging options, dining experiences and access to outdoor pursuits through local outfitters and tour companies. Home to the 2021 and 2022 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, as well as the 2021 IRONMAN World Championship, Greater Zion also is a world-class destination for sporting events, conferences and meetings. The Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office is a transient-room-tax-funded entity of Washington County, Utah. For more information, please visit GreaterZion.com.

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