Hot Air Balloon and Pilot Lineup Announced for Sept 17-20 H-E-B | Central Market Plano Balloon Festival

2026 theme, Shared Horizon, celebrates the vibrant sport of ballooning that has brought North Texas together for more than four decades.

PLANO, TX, UNITED STATES, September 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The H-E-B | Central Market Plano Balloon Festival returns September 17-20, 2026, bringing more than 40 hot air balloons, special shapes and four days of family-friendly entertainment to Red Tail Pavilion / Oak Point Park, 2801 E. Spring Creek Parkway in Plano.



2026 H-E-B | Central Market Plano Balloon Festival Shared Horizon Poster

“There is nothing quite like watching the launch field come alive as the pilots and crew begin inflating the balloons,” says Amy Leone, Balloon Operations Coordinator. “A year of planning leads to those incredible moments. We are thrilled to welcome 12 special shapes that includes a pig, duck, llama, frog, bear, fish, birds, cat, raccoon, and even a unicorn and sasquatch sighting. I can’t wait for everyone to experience the excitement of the inflations and glows.”

The 2026 theme, Shared Horizon, celebrates the vibrant sport of ballooning that has brought North Texas together for more than four decades. It reflects the moment pilots, crews, families and spectators look to the same sky as colorful balloons bring Red Tail Pavilion / Oak Point Park to life. This year's artwork features sponsor balloons and special shapes set against a sunrise or sunset horizon that has become a Festival signature.

"Each balloon and pilot brings a different story to the launch field, but together they create an experience that belongs to the entire community," said Jo Via, Festival Director. "From longtime Festival favorites to imaginative special shapes and newly introduced balloons, this year’s lineup will fill our Shared Horizon and give families even more reasons to share in the wonder.”

The Festival proudly presents the participating hot air balloons and pilots as follows:

Spirit of H-E-B – Amie Cato
Central Market Whisk Away – Shane Hale
Highly Cool for FOX4 – Keith Berry
RE/MAX – Steve Lombardi
Thomas J Henry – Josh Cato
Excellence – Matt Robison
1-Liner – Tabatha Rainwater
Airview A/C – Michael Celentano
Allycorn – Chris Glen
Calypso – Eric Wiggins
Chick-Fil-A Lil Nugget – Scott Vesely
Chris P. Bacon – Jordan Cox
Confetti – Cleatus McDonel
Dawn's Light – Lillian Speicher
Ducking Grateful – Jason Provost
Fired Up Too – Michael Marx
Freedom – Michael Wilson
HERicane – Julie Byers
Highlight – Kerry Speicher
Hope – Bill Broker and Jenny Karlovich
IMON8 – Jeff Abel



2026 Hot Air Balloon Schedule for the H-E-B | Central Market Plano Balloon Festival

> We are thrilled to welcome 12 special shapes that include a pig, duck, llama, frog, bear, fish, birds, cat, raccoon, and even a unicorn and sasquatch sighting."
>
> *Amy Leone, Balloon Operations Coordinator*

In The Buff - Plains Capital Bank – Barry Ballinger
Inn of the Mountain Gods – William Baker
Jersey Lilly – Bob Evans
Kermie – Anthony Haynes
Larry the Bear – Tom Brown
Lovebirds – Trevor Matejowsky
Lovin' Life In The Air – Lowell White
Milton the Fish – Jesse Harris
Nerfer – Mike Bertetto
No Prob Llama – Cory Davis
No Problemz – Robert Snyder
Puddy Cat – Al Smith
Scout Cloudfoot – John Brese, Morgan Snipes and Melanie Cabaniss
Texit Coin Freedom Flyer – Jason Myers
Thistle Down III – Michael Shouse
Tweety – Brian Chase
Up Rohr – Brian Rohr

UpRohr 2 – Dave Griffin
Visit Las Cruces – Jacob Little
Wash – TJ Davis
Ziggy – Mike Fielding and Melanie Cabaniss

Schedule of Hot Air Balloon Events
September 17 at 7:30 p.m. - Balloon Glow presented by BMW
September 18 at 7:30 p.m. - Balloon Glow presented by RE/MAX of Texas
September 19 at 7:00 a.m. - Balloon Launch presented by H-E-B
September 19 at 7:30 p.m. - Balloon Glow presented by H-E-B | Central Market
September 20 at 7:00 a.m. - Balloon Launch presented by Thomas J Henry

Entertainment continues throughout the weekend on the FOX4 Main Stage. Opening night features the Plano Symphony Orchestra Big Band, followed by Midtown 10 on Friday and a full Saturday lineup that includes the Plano Community Band, Children's Chorus of Collin County, cultural and dance performances, and Ice House Band presented by Baylor Scott & White Heart Hospital.

The RE/MAX of Texas Parachute Team is scheduled to land on the launch field Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

Beyond the launch field, guests can take a tethered balloon ride, explore the Central Market Kids Fun Zone with inflatable and mechanical rides, and visit the free Kids Korner for hands-on arts and crafts. Food concessions, merchandise vendors and sponsor activations add to the Festival experience, while 22 participating local nonprofit agencies help operate the event, raise awareness for their programs and earn funds that support their work throughout the community.

Festival Dates & Hours



Volunteer Call for H-E-B | Central Market Plano Balloon Festival



Chris P. Bacon Hot Air Balloon

September 17 – 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
September 18 – 4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
September 19 – 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
September 20 – 6:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Tickets & Parking
Onsite admission, ride-ticket and parking prices are listed below. Onsite sales are cashless and accept credit cards, debit cards and Apple Pay. Online advance admission tickets include applicable processing fees.

- $10 General Admission
- $5 Kids Ages 3-12
- $5 Seniors 65 and Over
- FREE for Kids 36” and Under
- FREE for all Military (including retired) with valid ID; one ticket per ID
- $10 Off-site Parking and $15 Prime Parking
- $20 All Day Kids Fun Zone Ride Wristband
- $50 VIP Plano Symphony Orchestra Concert



No Prob Llama Hot Air Balloon owned by pilot Bill Broker

Parking is purchased onsite and is not available for advance online purchase. Prime parking is $15 per vehicle at Collin College Spring Creek Campus, Oak Point Recreation Center, and First United Methodist Church. Off-site parking is $10 per vehicle at Plano Event Center.

Festival guests may also park at DART's Parker Road Station and ride a free add Luxury Motor Coach to Admission Gate 4; buses run continuously throughout each Festival day.

Ride-share pickup and drop-off is also located at Parker Road Station. Guests are encouraged to avoid Spring Creek Parkway, use alternate routes east to Jupiter Road and follow event signage, as Spring Creek Parkway between Jupiter and Parker roads will be closed to traffic.

Tickets and information are available at www.planoballoonfest.org and follow Facebook and Instagram.

The Plano Balloon Festival, Inc. takes place in an outdoor, uncovered venue and has a NO REFUND POLICY. In the unlikely event the Festival is suspended or cancelled due to inclement weather, city, state, national, or local public health concerns/restrictions, force majeure or other causes beyond Festival control there will be no refunds or a rescheduled date. When severe weather conditions exist in close proximity to the Festival grounds, we may choose to delay the event for an hour or more, before deciding to cancel or proceed. The onsite attendees safety is our primary concern. If weather conditions dictate, we may have to cancel a specific day’s

activities. If the weather conditions improve, we will evaluate the forecast and re-open the Festival.

About Plano Balloon Festival, Inc.
The Plano Balloon Festival, Inc. is a non-profit 501c3 organized for the purpose of staging a premier community-based and family-oriented hot air balloon event, offering other local non-profits volunteer opportunities within the Festival operations. The Plano Balloon Festival, Inc. makes a direct impact on the Collin County community by dispersing funds to participating non-profit agencies and has donated more than $3 million since inception.

Cece Henley
The League Lady
+ +1 214-695-8192
email us here
Visit us on social media:
LinkedIn
Instagram
Facebook
YouTube
TikTok
X

This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/939828864

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.
© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.