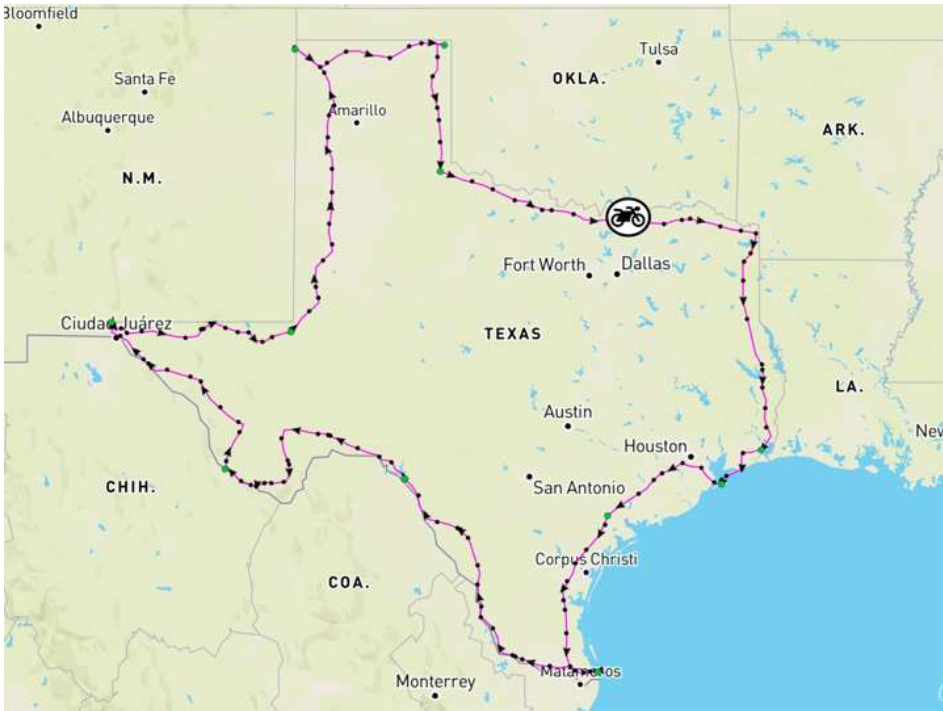


RAT Report

(Ride Around Texas)



3,100 Miles Around Texas in 61 hrs. 41 min

In 2021, the Iron Butt Association (IBA) Big as Texas (BAT) Party included the Ride Around Texas (RAT) as one of the many ride options this year in Denison, TX. It would be a week of rides known as the Big as Texas Ride-a-Palooza!

On Sunday, Sept. 26, the Senior Butt and Junior Butt rallies would begin. These were 2-bike teams competing in a 6-day scavenger hunt. 19 bikes total for both events.

On Tuesday, Sept. 28, the RAT riders would be released. There

were 17 bikes registered for this 3-to-4-day event.

On Friday, Oct. 1, the SS1000 riders (14 bikes) and BBG1500 riders (2 bikes) would be released for a 24-hour event.

All week long, incoming riders would be doing various IBA rides to Denison, TX on their way to the party.

Karen and I would arrive to see the rally riders off on Sunday. Karen would stay at rally central all week

and help volunteer with IBA staff, while I rode the RAT.



BAT Headquarters

BAT RAT Rules 2021:

Ride the perimeter of Texas, clockwise or counterclockwise, stopping at 18 mandatory checkpoints, including start/finish point, in order within the allotted time period.

RAT Insanity - less than 85 hours

RAT Insanity Gold - less than 70 hours

You must obtain a Dated Business Receipt (DBR) every 350 miles or less AND in the following jurisdictions and the receipt MUST indicate the city, date and time. Check your receipts.

Denison (START location)

Paris

Texarkana

Port Arthur

Port Bolivar (Take a picture of your motorcycle on the Galveston - Port Bolivar ferry while underway)

Galveston

Victoria

South Padre Island

Del Rio

Panther Junction, Big Bend NP

(Take a picture of your motorcycle in front of Visitor Center sign)

Lajitas General Store (Take a picture of your motorcycle in front of store sign)

Presidio

Anthony

Guadalupe Mountains National Park (Take a picture of your motorcycle in front of park entrance)

Kermit

Texline

Follett

Childress

Denison (END location)

You may not leave the State of Texas except for emergencies. If you do leave the state, you must return to the point where you crossed the border and continue your ride from that point.

The night before, RAT Wrangler, Tim Masterson, had a pre-ride dinner planned at Craft Pies Pizza Company. It was a great time to get to know the riders that would be attempting the RAT.

My strategy for this ride was to ride the BMW R1250GSA (GSA) and go clockwise. I felt the eastern side of Texas was the most populated

and would be the most challenging part of the ride. I targeted Rio Grande City, 1,025 miles away, as my first overnight stay. Kermit would be my second overnight at 1,132 miles. That would leave 926 miles remaining for the final day back to Denison. This plan worked well for me!



RAT Pre-Ride Feast

Sept 28 – Breakfast was served at 6:00 am. Rider's meeting at 6:45 am.

During the Rider's meeting, we were told because of all the activity along the Mexican border, we could defer a DBR. If we felt uncomfortable stopping for a mandatory DBR continue on until we felt safe and obtain the next DBR possible.

Note: Illegal immigrants have been crossing our border by the thousands this year due to the new Biden presidential administration.

RAT Wrangler, Tim, had logged our odometer readings the night before or this morning prior to departure.

We were released at exactly 7:00 am. Twelve riders chose the clockwise (CW) route while the remaining five chose the counterclockwise (CCW) route. It was dark and 70 degrees as we left out of the hotel parking lot that morning.

First checkpoint, Texarkana – Most of the CW riders arrived at the same time. The gas station had plenty of pumps, so no waiting. After fueling up, the bikes scattered! Some chose to ride in small groups. I prefer to ride solo. This way, I don't have any other distractions and can ride my own ride at my own pace.

As I headed south near the Beaumont area, it started to rain! By the time, I made it to the Port Arthur checkpoint, it was pouring buckets! I passed Doug Vance, Gene Cofer and Larry Telling while riding over the Rainbow Bridge. It was just pouring down rain! A few minutes later, we all met at a gas station for our DBR. I was last man out.

It was still raining steady as I caught up with Kith Burkingstock and Greg Fizer. I followed them into Winnie. As we were riding through town on a 4-lane divided highway, a semi tractor-trailer ahead of us in the right lane hit deep standing water! We could see the huge tidal wave spray to the right as the truck drove

through! It was deep! Kith led us over to the left edge of the left lane where the water was at least 6-8 inches deep. We slowly rode through thankful the truck had warned us of this huge water hazard!

I continued on behind Kith and Greg to the ferry at Port Bolivar. On the way, we rode right beside the Gulf of Mexico for miles. The Gulf was rough as we rode along. The rain slowly subsided as we approached the ferry landing. Once there, we immediately loaded the boat and departed. No waiting here!



Port Bolivar-Galveston Ferry

Nine of the CW riders made it to this boat. This gave us about a 30-minute break. Once across the Houston Ship Channel, the bikes scattered again. This time to different gas stations for the required Galveston DBR. I rode up I-45 to the Sam Houston Tollway around Houston to I-69. This led me southwest to Hwy 59 and on to Victoria.

In Victoria, I stopped to fuel up and obtain my mandatory DBR. The gas station had a Mexican fast-food joint next door. I ate a large taco. As I finished my quick meal, Kith and

Greg pulled in. They decided to grab a taco too!

After leaving Victoria, the rain and wind picked up near Corpus Christie. It was not the worst wind I've ridden in, but pretty bad! A semi-truck and trailer were blown over on the right shoulder of the road! There must have been some unbelievable wind gusts earlier in this area!

Between Kingsville and Harlingen there were no services. It was dark and desolate. I saw a bobcat trotting along the right side-ditch as I headed south.

I stopped for my mandatory DBR in South Padre Island. From here, it was 100 miles to the hotel near Rio Grande City. *1,025 miles for today.*

Sept 29—It was 12:01 am as I fueled up prior to getting my hotel room. After that, I showered and crashed! I woke up at 3:50 am. I tossed and turned for a few minutes before deciding to get up. I brushed my teeth and was out the door. I left the parking lot at 4:26 am.

I have learned that speed is not as much of a factor as you might think. What is a bigger factor is down time—any time you are not moving. It was only because I couldn't sleep that I gained time on the other riders.

It was still dark as I rode through Laredo on my way to Del Rio. Very few cars were out at this time of the morning. Shortly after, the sun rose

with overcast skies. This kept the temperatures very comfortable!

Del Rio had been in the news the week prior due to all the illegal immigrants crossing over. Plus, a large group of Haitians (approximately 15,000) ended up crossing into the U.S. there and setting up camp!

When I arrived in Del Rio at 9:00 am, there was very little sign of life. Only a few people were out and about. I stopped, fueled up and obtained my mandatory DBR before heading to Big Bend.

As I headed west, the clouds slowly dissolved into blue skies. I stopped at the entrance to the National Park. Veterans got in free! They waived the \$25 fee and gave me a National Park Pass good for a year! Life was good!

I love riding in Big Bend! Beautiful desert mountains! The temperatures had warmed up to 95 degrees by now. I made it to Panther Junction where a photo of my bike was required with the Panther Junction Visitors Center Welcome sign in the background.



Panther Junction

Once through Big Bend, I rode through the town of Terlingua and on to Lajitas where a photo of my bike in front of the General Store was required.



Lajitas General Store

Prior to the ride, Kith had mentioned to me that he was planning to eat at the General Store. I thought that sounded like a good idea. So, I had been looking forward to this stop for hours. Now, I was hungry! When I walked in, it was just a small convenience store. I didn't see any food counter or anything. So, I asked where I could get something to eat. The lady behind the counter said there was a restaurant down the road 30 seconds and behind the hotel resort. I'll stop there!

So, I ride around behind the hotel, not seeing anything until I noticed the little café away from the parking lot and in the middle of the resort. I get off the bike and walk in to find about 20 lady golfers in line ordering food! They must have just finished their morning round of golf! No way am I waiting in line here! Off I go hungry!

I jump back on Highway 170 headed west. Within a few miles,

the road and scenery were spectacular! I was riding next to the Rio Grande River in mountains and canyons on this curvy, hilly two-lane road! It was awesome! Unlike most roads, this was three-dimensional with the up and down hills along with the curves. And, these little hills would go straight – all you could see was the sky until you peaked the hill—then straight down! I loved it! Definitely one of my favorite roads! Highway 170 between Lajitas and Presidio is also known as “The River Road”!



The River Road

I stopped in Presidio to feed my hunger pangs. A little restaurant served burritos. I asked about the red and green sauce they listed on the chalkboard menu. The lady said the green sauce was hot. I said, I'll take the red sauce then! As I was eating the burrito, my mouth was burning as I was relishing how great it tasted! My lips burned for an hour after leaving! Glad I didn't get the green sauce!

I continued up to Marfa where I passed the Prada store.

Wikipedia paraphrased - Prada Marfa is a permanent art installation by artists Elmgreen and

Dragset. It is a freestanding building. The front door is nonfunctional. On the front of the structure there are two large windows displaying actual Prada wares, shoes and handbags."

A few miles beyond is where the movie “Giant” was filmed starring James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor. Since I grew up near James Dean's hometown, I had to stop for a picture!



Movie “Giant”

From there to El Paso was uneventful. Traffic thickened as I entered the El Paso city limits during rush hour. I made it up to Anthony in the far western corner at 6:45 pm where I stopped for a mandatory DBR. Time to head east!

Darkness set in as I backtracked around El Paso and headed toward the Guadalupe Mountains. The Clearwater auxiliary lights sure did come in handy on those desolate roads at night! I enjoy riding at night in comfortable weather and clear skies! I stopped at the entrance sign to the Guadalupe Mountains National Park for my mandatory photo. Life was good!



Guadalupe Mountains NP

I continued on through the small town of Orla then on to Mentone. From there to Kermit was a challenging two-lane road. This 30-mile stretch had a lot of road construction. Several places had automatic stoplights that controlled traffic around bridge and road construction sites. The main road was blocked, and you were routed around it on a very rough/tore up shoulder. Once back on the main road it would be a rough washboard texture. I know those big touring bikes were hating this! The suspension on the GSA worked great! I continued on to the town of Kermit. *1,132 miles for today.*

Sept 30 – It was 12:10 am on the DBR I obtained prior to checking in the hotel. I was up at 6:16 am and on the road by 6:45 am.

The temperature was cool with a fierce crosswind as I headed north through the panhandle. These are the Texas plains where wind is the norm. And, windy it was! I enjoyed passing the huge cattle feedlots near Hereford and Dalhart. It was 58 degrees when I arrived to Texline in the northwest corner.

When I doubled back, I passed Doug, Gene and Larry in Dalhart. I figured I was an hour in front of them. As I headed east, I was going with the wind! I arrived in Follet for the mandatory northeast DBR. From there, I headed south to Childress.

When I arrived, I stopped for my mandatory DBR, then looked up Top Notch BBQ in my GPS. I had been talking to Karen on the phone and told her I was probably going to stop and eat in Childress. So, she looked up eating places and came up with Top Notch BBQ. She said it had great reviews! I wasn't disappointed! After dinner, I called Karen to tell her how good it was. The sky was overcast and just a few sprinkles dotted my windshield. I told Karen the clouds didn't look like rain clouds. So, I wasn't worried about the weather. As I rode toward the RAT finish, the sun went down. A violent thunderstorm seemed to stay ahead of me the rest of the ride to Denison. I did get into a little rain but nothing that would slow me down.

I ended my ride at the Quick Trip near the hotel in Denison. My official end time was 8:41 pm. *926 miles for the day and a grand total of 3,083 miles in 61 hours and 41 minutes for the ride.*

When I arrived at the hotel, Karen met me. She asked if I had trouble getting a DBR in Childress due to the power being out all over town. I told her that Childress was dry when I went through. It had sprinkled a

little, but only a few drops. She said the group behind me couldn't get a DBR due to the whole town being without electricity and there was flash flooding! Really? I could hardly believe it!

I was the fourth one in! Lance Corley (CCW), Nathan Stueber (CCW) and Kimberly Walling (CW) had arrived before me. Although by no means a race, but someone must come in first. I rode my ride and thoroughly enjoyed every mile of it!

Karen and I waited around the front entrance for others to finish. Jim McCrain came in about an hour after me. Robert Long, a buffalo rancher from Missouri was in shortly after Jim. Both were from the CCW group.



Jim McCrain and Nathan Stueber



Robert Long (Buffalo Rancher)

The CW group behind me finally rolled in after 11:00 pm. They had stories to tell of the bad storm in Childress and how there was no power. They said the water was knee deep in some places on the road. They had to park under an awning at a convenience store where the owners sold them food through the door. They weren't allowed in and had to exchange cash through the door since there was no power. This group included Doug Vance, Gene Cofer and Larry Telling. Kith and Greg caught up with them along with Patrick Nijsters. Once the rain calmed down a little this larger group stayed together the rest of the ride to back Denison.



Doug Vance

All in all, thirteen riders completed the ride in under 70-hours for a gold insanity finish. Three others completed within the 85-hour limit for the insanity finish.

The last rider in was a retired ER Doctor from Northern California. He had tire issues in West Texas. He said he wasted half a day trying to get his tire replaced. He didn't give up and completed the ride. Way to go, George Mowry!

Only one rider didn't finish the ride. Doni Evans went down in the bad storm in Childress. He went to the hospital and was checked out. He was okay. His bike didn't fare so well. Later at the banquet, he said he was sure the bike was totaled. We're glad he was okay!

That Saturday, around 150 people attended the banquet and award presentations. SBR and JBR awards were presented by Rally Master, Cliff Wall. RAT Wrangler, Tim Masterson, and IBA President Mike Kneebone handed out our certificates and numbered flags. Our number on the flag was according to the order we finished. This was determined by our final DBR from

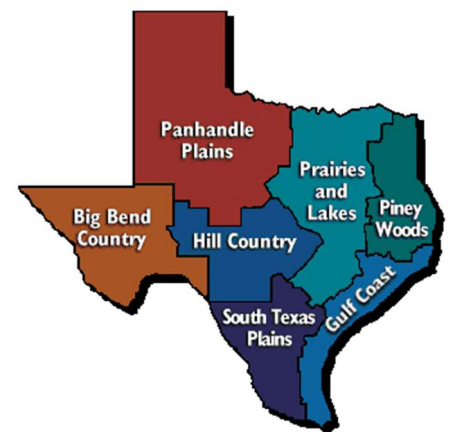
the Quick Trip. We heard some Iron Butt Rally history from Coordinator Lisa Landry. Also, Chris Hopper spoke of his attempt of 1,000 miles a day for 100 days straight. He was currently on day 67.

It was great to ride with these very accomplished riders and to share the same goal! Everyone had a different story to tell from their own perspective. Memories we will cherish forever!



RAT Riders

Texas is awesome! It's so diverse! Starting in the Prairies and Lakes Region around to the Piney Woods, Gulf Coast, South Texas Plains and Border of Mexico, through Big Bend Country and the Panhandle Plains. It's great all the way around!



Gene Cofer



Larry Telling

Ride Around Texas				
Bike: 2019 BMW R1250GSA				
Low Temp	58			9/28/21 Start Time 7:00 am
High Temp	95			9/30/21 End Time 8:41 pm
Bike Odo Mileage	3,083			Total Time 61.7 hrs
Google Maps	3,120			
				Total Down Time/Rest 11.1 hrs
Start Odo	-53,697			
End Odo	56,780			Average Miles Per Hour 49 mph
Total Fuel	92.772			Gas Mileage 33 mpg
Day 1	Gallons	Leg Time	Miles Per Leg	
Gas 1	4.68	2:16	156	
Gas 2	6.169	3:06	198	
Gas 3	2.687	2:35	87	
Gas 4	1.714	0:43	69	
Gas 5	5.015	2:42	169	
Gas 6	3.644	1:53	108	
Gas 7	3.479	1:54	130	
Gas 8	3.237	1:52	108	
Day 1 Totals	30.625	17:02	1025	
	Down Time	4:25		
Day 2				
Gas 1	4.463	2:58	185	
Gas 2	3.467	1:39	100	
Gas 3	3.31	1:50	117	
Gas 4	4.381	2:28	144	
Gas 5	1.677	1:46	68	
Gas 6	6.276	3:07	201	
Gas 7	1.823	1:31	72	
Gas 8	4.805	3:19	188	
Gas 9	1.55	1:06	57	
Day 2 Totals	31.752	19:42	1132	
	Down Time	6:37		
Day 3				
Gas 1	5.879	2:17	170	
Gas 2	7.003	2:48	195	
Gas 3	6.124	2:43	182	
Gas 4	4.15	2:13	152	
Gas 5	7.239	3:55	227	
Day 3 Totals	30.395	13:55	926	
Totals	92.772	61:41:00	3083	

RAT Stats