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## **START YOUR ENGINES: AMERICAN RACE CARS** **AT THE REAGAN LIBRARY**

**NEW EXHIBIT TO RUN MAY 27 – OCTOBER 23, 2011**

**RACE CARS ON DISPLAY INCLUDE CARS FROM RICHARD PETTY,**  
**JIMMIE JOHNSON, DALE EARNHARDT JR. AND SR., LYN ST. JAMES,**  
**KURT BUSCH AND MORE**

(SIMI VALLEY, Calif.) – In 1984, President Ronald Reagan became the first sitting U.S. President to attend a NASCAR race. That July, he started the Firecracker 400 at Daytona International Speedway where he gave the command, “Gentlemen, start your engines!” from aboard Air Force One. Later that day, Air Force One landed at Daytona International Airport behind the Speedway in full view of the fans. It was at that race that Richard Petty captured his historic 200<sup>th</sup> victory.

In honor of President Reagan’s relationship and fascination with auto racing, The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation presents *Start Your Engines: American Race Cars at the Reagan Library*, on view from May 27 through October 23, 2011. The exhibit features a wide array of storied vehicles from the history of American auto racing from the 1930s to today, including those from NASCAR and IndyCar. Visitors will view historic cars driven by legends such as Dale Earnhardt, Sr. and Richard Petty, as well as cars by current racers Kurt Busch, Jimmie Johnson, Dale Earnhardt, Jr. and Austin Dillon, who will make his NASCAR Sprint Cup Series debut later this year.

“Ronald Reagan’s connection to American car racing dates back to the 1930s, where, as a young radio announcer, he was calling races,” said John Heubusch, executive director for the Ronald Reagan

Editor’s Note: Photos available upon request.

Presidential Foundation. “That love stayed with him, and as President of the United States he spent the fourth of July at the Daytona Firecracker 400, where he became the first sitting president to call a race.”

A few exhibit highlights include:

- Richard Petty’s winning Firecracker 400 Pontiac from the race Ronald Reagan officially started in 1984
- Dale Earnhardt, Sr.’s #2 Chevy – the car in which he won the 1980 Winston Cup Championship
- Kurt Busch’s 2011 #22 Auto Club Dodge Charger (show car) which he recently raced in the Auto Club 400 in California, March 2011
- Lyn St. James’ 1989 Ford Thunderbird Super Coupe, in which she set 31 national and international speed records on a closed course at Talladega Speedway
- Jimmie Johnson’s 2007 #48 Lowe’s Chevrolet that he drove at Homestead to clinch his 2<sup>nd</sup> Championship
- Dale Earnhardt, Jr.’s 2010 #88 AMP Energy/National Guard Chevrolet Impala
- Austin Dillon’s 2011 #98 Chevrolet Impala, co-sponsored by the Ronald Reagan Centennial, which will be raced later this year
- Dan Wheldon’s 2011 #98 INDY car, which will be raced later this year

In addition to the cars, personal items from drivers like trophies, fire suits, helmets and other artifacts, photos and video will also be on display.

*This exhibit is sponsored by the Auto Club of Southern California, with special thanks to Mike Curb and Mike Curb Racing.*

The Reagan Library is located at 40 Presidential Drive in Simi Valley, California. Public hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The Museum admission fees are \$12.00 for general admission, \$9.00 for seniors 62 and over, \$6 for children 11-17 and free for children 10 years of age and under. For more information, call (800) 410.8354 or visit [www.reaganlibrary.com](http://www.reaganlibrary.com).

### **About the Automobile Club of Southern California:**

The Automobile Club of Southern California, the largest member of the AAA federation of motor clubs, has been serving Southern California since 1900. Today, the Auto Club’s more than six million members benefit by roadside assistance, insurance products and services, travel agency, financial products, automotive pricing and buying programs, automotive testing and analysis, trip planning services and highway and transportation safety programs. Information about these products and services is available on the Auto Club’s Web site at [www.AAA.com](http://www.AAA.com).

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