



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Happy Birthday *Thunderbird* Yacht  
Lake Tahoe's Famous Wooden Boat Turns 70**

America's most recognizable wooden speedboat, the iconic *Thunderbird* Yacht, is celebrating her 70<sup>th</sup> year on Lake Tahoe. Since America's Great Depression, *Thunderbird* has transported guests in opulent luxury between high-mountain estates and resorts. Now owned by Foundation 36, a Nevada public charity, *Thunderbird* continues to promote Lake Tahoe's maritime heritage and serves as a floating classroom for children's educational programs and as a platform for scientific and environmental research.

Harkening back to a gilded age, *Thunderbird* is 55-feet of art-deco elegance featuring the subtle textures of rich hardwoods, gleaming metals, and elegant crystal. With the mighty roar of vintage aircraft engines producing 1200-horsepower each, *Thunderbird* rockets guests across the Lake-in-the-Sky at speeds approaching 70mph. Celebrities who have graced her decks include Ty Cobb, Howard Hughes, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, and U.S. Presidents.

Enigmatic George Whittell Jr. commissioned *Thunderbird* in the style of his Duesenberg automobiles and Douglas DC-2 aircraft for use at his majestic Thunderbird Lodge estate on Lake Tahoe's East Shore. (See [www.ThunderbirdLodge.org](http://www.ThunderbirdLodge.org) for mansion tour information.) Constructed at a cost of \$87,000 (more than \$3.3-million today), the secretive Whittell launched *Thunderbird* from Tahoe City in the pre-dawn hours of July 14, 1940.

On July 30-31, 2010, *Thunderbird* commands center stage at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic where more than 65 antique and classic boats will be displayed at Tahoe Keys Marina in South Lake Tahoe, CA. ([www.TahoeWoodenBoats.com](http://www.TahoeWoodenBoats.com))

All summer long, *Thunderbird* will attend charity events at Lake Tahoe venues and marinas. Please check your local papers for information about arrival times, celebrity guest appearances, and complimentary public tours.

Foundation 36 is a 501(c)(3) public charity having a mission to preserve and protect Nevada's cultural, historic, and natural treasures. *Thunderbird's* 70<sup>th</sup> birthday kicks-off a fundraising campaign to build an endowment to keep *Thunderbird* operating on Lake Tahoe for generations to come.

For more information about corporate and personal sponsorships, birthday events, and how to donate to save this historic vessel, please contact Bill Watson at 775-828-3536 (e-mail [Watson@F36.org](mailto:Watson@F36.org)) or visit [www.ThunderbirdYacht.com](http://www.ThunderbirdYacht.com).