

Colorado DeCOmp 2016: Atomic Age

October 15, 2016

Event Planning:

The DeCOmp steering committee began meeting regularly in April of 2016, after a preliminary meeting in January to vote on a venue so that contract negotiations could begin. Initially the group met once per month, then twice per month, and finally once – and even twice – per week as the event grew closer. Meetings were held at a warehouse managed by a member of the Burning Man community, with a fee of \$500 for the use of space.

The majority of the committee consisted of people who had previously volunteered to help plan the first Colorado Bernal Equinox (CBE) and other Decompressions. For the most part, lead positions were given to people who asked for them, and only a few positions remained open for the majority of the planning season. Outdoor stage creation and management was one of those positions, and was eventually taken on by the DJ/Sound lead and co-lead.

Grants for art projects could be applied for, and funds distribution was decided on by the art committee. A total of \$7,400 was given to artists to help them bring their creations to DeCOmp. Performance positions (art, fire, and DJs/bands) were also applied for. All fire and art performers were accepted and given times in which to perform. DJs' and bands' names were put on a list and numbered. Numbers were then put into a hat and drawn by different steering committee members. The drawn numbers were then correlated back to the list of names, and those names were notified they had been selected.

Two of the major accomplishments the committee saw this year were the complete overhaul of the DenverBurners.org website, and the creation of a universal form that all volunteers and performers can use to sign up to participate. In the interest of transparency, all meeting notes were published on the website, with items that had been voted on called out in a separate document. The creation of a Gifting Lead allowed one person to be able to focus on creating/procuring gifts to thank all volunteers. An Urgency Committee was also created (consisting of seven members of the Steering Committee) so budget items could be voted on between meetings, if an issue needed an immediate answer.

Several items that had been noted in the 2015 After Burn Report were addressed:

- Opening a position of Recycling Lead was suggested, and was initially implemented at CBE 2016. The position was incorporated in DeCOmp as well, and will be included in all Denver Burner events moving forward. Though attendees are encouraged to Leave No Trace and pack out what they brought in, recycling receptacles have been made available to deter participants from throwing items into the venue-supplied trash cans.
- The number of port-o-potties needed to accommodate all attendees was overestimated to ensure adequate facilities were available.

- Outdoor sound limits were strictly monitored and adhered to in order to avoid incurring a \$1000 noise violation fine from the city.
- The placement team made sure to set up areas around the event that were away from the loud sound and were therefore conducive to relaxing and having conversations without shouting.

The Event:

The event was held at a local venue that allowed us to use their space for a bar guarantee rather than a rental fee. The venue accommodated our request to not use straws or plastic toothpicks in drinks in order to lessen waste. Because they are a licensed bar, we could not request attendees to bring their own cups, but we did encourage them to bring empty water bottles for which we provided free water. The bar did not serve in disposable cups.

The venue did not serve food, and could not allow food to be brought in, but attendees were able to leave and come back if they wanted. In the interest of convenience and safety, food trucks were invited to set up outside of the event boundaries.

We worked with the city of Denver to close off the major street running in front of the venue, which we then connected with the venue-owned parking lot across the street. There were a total of three stages throughout – one indoor stage for DJs, one outdoor stage for DJs and an outdoor stage for performances. All fire art was kept to the outside areas.

The event ran from 2:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 15. Because the event venue is a bar, minors were allowed from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Attendance: 1571

Total Revenue: \$33,199.00

Total Expenses: \$22,307.46

Net Revenue: 12,891.54

Charity Donations: ~\$1500 to either the Colorado Core Project or Black Rock Solar

Donation to Food Bank of the Rockies: \$1571 (\$1 per ticket sold)

Planning Team Size: 48

Total Volunteers: 357

Art Installations: 24 funded art projects, 12 non-funded

Art Philanthropy: \$7,400

Performance Artists: 21 fire, 7 non-fire, 19 both fire and non-fire, 3 safeties; totaling 50

DJ/Music Performers: 22

Post Event:

The venue was pleased with the way our community treated their property during and after the event. We met our bar guarantee, so we were refunded our \$2500 deposit. We were not charged with a noise violation by the city of Denver.

A post-event survey was sent to all volunteers to gauge how their volunteer experience had been (whether they were involved for months, or just for the day), what was done well, and what could have been better. Overall, the event was deemed a success, though the most common complaint for volunteers was that communication needed improvement. A suggestion was made at the wrap-up meeting that emails could be crafted for leads to send out to their teams, thus ensuring all leads send consistent information, and leads who are very busy don't have to take time to write an email.