

5.) OMAHA TO ONAWA

Saturday 7/18

PLEASE NOTE: The Omaha Airport STILL has significant construction project going on. This may affect your timeline as you leave the airport and catch a shuttle to our airport hotels.

Basic Shuttle Info:

- Our shuttle operates in the rear parking lot of the **Candlewood Suites at the Omaha airport**, on Saturday, 7/18
- Address: 2601 Abbott Plaza, Omaha, NE 68110
- Approximately a 1.5 hour trip from Omaha to Onawa
- Departures about every hour throughout the day on Saturday, beginning at 8:00 AM, with the last departure at 4:00 PM (firm). We have built our departure schedule around the preferences we receive from riders on their Detail Forms.
- No departures after 4:00 PM
- We'll use very comfortable coaches, restroom-equipped and air-conditioned. Your bags will go into the compartments under the coach and your bike will be loaded on a trailer. [See section on Protecting Your Bike for Truck Transport, and see "Bike Transport" below.]

Omaha Airport Crew at Candlewood Suites Hotel

Becca Castle Laughlin, and about a dozen other Pork Crew members will greet you as you arrive to use our largest airport shuttle.

Staying in Omaha Airport Hotels

You don't need an Omaha hotel room on Saturday night, 7/18. You will be camping with PBV in Onawa—or if you're not with us, you'll camp in the Main Campground or with your weeklong charter or group.

If you need a room near the Omaha airport on Friday, 7/17, or Saturday, 7/25, these are the Pork Belly Ventures designated airport hotels which are right next door to each other, literally across a parking lot. Please note that by this point in the season, our blocks are full on some nights.

Best Western Plus, 2510 Abbott Plaza, Carter Lake, IA 51510, **Room Blocks Expire on 7/3**
402-505-4900

- 3 Standard Double Queen Rooms available on Friday 7/17
- 14 Standard Double Queen Rooms available on Saturday 7/25
- Mention our name to reserve your king or double queen room for \$147 or so.
- Hot breakfast served here
- Our blocks have expired, but you can call and give it a try.
- People do cancel rooms, so you can try phoning from time to time, in case a room has opened up.

Candlewood Suites, 2601 Abbott Plaza, Omaha, NE 68110 **Room Blocks Full/Expired**
402-342-2500

- This extended-stay hotel could have cancellations, so you're welcome to call and see if they have rooms.
- Mention our name to reserve your king or double queen room for \$142 or so.
- No breakfast here, but they do have a little convenience store in the lobby, and a pancake restaurant just a little ways from the front door.
- Shuttle departs from this hotel parking lot.

We do not have room blocks in other airport hotels. Since our blocks have filled, we've been recommending the nearby Country Inn and Suites, the Hampton Inn, and the Holiday Inn Express, all south of our hotels on Abbott Drive.

Wherever you stay in Omaha, it's your responsibility to get to Candlewood Suites for your shuttle. At the end of RAGBRAI, our coaches drop off at Candlewood Suites.

Be considerate, please, of the staff and respect the furniture and linens that belong to the hotel. If you need to work on your bike, ask hotel staff if they can give you rags. Please don't use their bath towels. Do any bike work outside, not on their carpet, please. We don't mean to insult you with these reminders, but it has happened.

Amenities Near These Omaha Hotels

- Large convenience store (with beer/wine/spirits)
- Subway sandwich shop
- Perkins Restaurant right there (with breakfast all day and other options).

Airport Parking

- Recommended for Parking: If you're staying at the Candlewood or Best Western Plus, visit with their staff about their inexpensive weeklong parking in the hotel lots. This does not need to be reserved in advance. Walk in and arrange it on the day, on a first-come, first-serve basis. At the Best Western Plus, The cost of this is \$7 per vehicle for the nights that the car is on the lot and the guest is not staying at the hotel. We were not able to confirm details of this at Candlewood Suites, so you will need to check with their hotel staff.
- We have also used Budget parking, quite near the hotels, for \$7.50 per day. They have a fenced lot, patrolled regularly. But allow time to walk to and from this facility, unless Budget will give you a lift in one of their vans. We do not arrange transfers to and from parking facilities.

If you fly into Omaha on Friday (7/17)

- Due to airport construction, some of these instructions could change slightly before you arrive. Please look for our Pork Belly Crew in neon green shirts to direct you, or utilize the airport's information centers, helpers, and maps for assistance as needed.
- If you're at baggage claim on the South end of the airport (American, Delta, Frontier, Alaska Airlines), walk out of the airport using Door #1 or #2.
- If you're at baggage claim on the North end of the airport (United, Southwest, Allegiant Airlines), walk out of the airport using Door #5.
- Cross over to the commercial lane.

- Board the next **Stewarts** van and tell them you're bound for Best Western Plus or Candlewood Suites, wherever you have a Friday night reservation. It's a short ride, and it's free – but by all means, feel free to tip these drivers who will be working very hard for Pork Belly shuttle folks all day if you are so inclined!
- By about 7:00 Saturday morning, we'll be set up outside on the north side of Candlewood Suites (the back parking lot).
- About 30 minutes before your scheduled shuttle departure time, come out and check in for your coach.
- For Dinner: We suggest a trip to Omaha's Old Market for dinner on Friday night. It's a fun place with great dining and entertainment. Our longtime favorite restaurant is Nicola's-Italian/Greek, very fresh, lovely outdoor patio. But we also like Upstream Brewery an awful lot. There are many more restaurants and shops. The Old Market is a great place for dining, shopping, and music. (Don't stay out too late!)

If you're flying into Omaha on Saturday (7/18)

- Due to airport construction, some of these instructions could change slightly before you arrive. Please look for our Pork Belly Crew in neon green shirts to direct you, or utilize the airport's information centers, helpers, and maps for assistance as needed.
- Our crew, wearing Pork Belly shirts and carrying signs, will meet you at baggage claim on Saturday. If you have completed your Detail Form, you'll be on their list of arrivals.
- They will reinforce these directions for you...
- If you're at baggage claim on the South end of the airport (American, Delta, Frontier, Alaska Airlines), walk out of the airport using Door #1 or #2.
- If you're at baggage claim on the North end of the airport (United, Southwest, Allegiant Airlines), walk out of the airport using Door #5.
- Cross to the commercial lane, and catch the first **Stewarts van. Tell the driver you're bound for Candlewood Suites. The shuttle is free.**
- If you are so inclined, tip these hard-working Stewarts drivers.
- Our check-in desk and all trucks and coaches will be on the north side (the back parking lot) of the Candlewood Suites hotel. Shuttles from the airport on Saturday will probably bring you right around back to our area, but if for some reason they drop you out front, walk straight in the front door, through the lobby, and out the back door to check in for your departure.
- When you've checked in with us for your coach, you can hang out in the hotel lobby (a/c, television, small convenience store, vending machines) until your departure.
- There's a big convenience store across the street from Candlewood, and also a Subway sandwich shop and a Perkins Restaurant (breakfast menu and burgers, etc) if you have a longer wait.

Summoning the Stewarts Airport Shuttle on Friday or Saturday

- The Stewarts Shuttle is likely to be circling all day on both Friday and Saturday, from the airport to the hotels.
- If you're at baggage claim on the South end of the airport (American, Delta, Frontier, Alaska Airlines), walk out of the airport using Door #1 or 2.
- If you're at baggage claim on the North end of the airport (United, Southwest, Allegiant Airlines), walk out of the airport using Door #5.

- Cross over to the Commercial Lane. The Stewarts van will be waiting or it will come along shortly.
- You can also call the hotel phone numbers and ask them to send the shuttle:
Candlewood: 402-342-2500
Best Western Plus: 402-505-4900

If you're driving into Omaha on Friday or Saturday (7/17 or 7/18)

- If you arrive on Friday, decide whether to park your vehicle on Friday evening or Saturday morning well before your scheduled departure.
- **On Saturday, we are using the rear parking lot of Candlewood Suites for loading bikes and for one coach after another, pulling in, loading, and pulling out. Do not plan to park and unload in this rear parking lot, please.**
- If you arrive on Saturday, please park at the front of the hotel. Be careful to stay clear of the path of our large coaches and bike trucks. When you have unloaded, you can check in for your departure, and if you have time, get food or drink to take on board your coach.
- Restrooms are just inside the back door of the hotel.
- There's a big convenience store across the street from Candlewood, and also a Subway sandwich shop and a Perkins Restaurant if you have a longer wait.

GIVE US A COURTESY TEXT IF YOU'RE DELAYED

- **If your plans change on Saturday, if your flight is delayed, if you encounter delays while driving to Omaha, please TEXT us your name and as many details as possible.**
- Candlewood front desk is 402/342-2500 and Becca's cell phone number is 515-210-0269.
- We don't promise to have seats for you on the next departure, but we can begin to think about reassigning you where we have open seats. These things often work out.
- If you don't show, the crew will be looking for you in the terminal or we'll be wondering whether you're still coming.
- If you arrive later than our last departure at 4:00, it's unlikely that we can provide a later departure. We have contracts for coaches during a certain window. We urge you to hedge your bets and plan an early arrival in Omaha. No harm in asking, and of course we will try to help, but we cannot promise to shuttle after 4:00 PM.
- (For much of the week, we will be unable to answer calls or texts, but will be very attentive on Saturday. If you don't get a reply, please text or call back.)

Groups on Coaches

- **The Detail Form is our essential tool** for making bus assignments on our bus-departure-management software at the website.
- If two members of the same group request different departure days/times, we have granted each person's request, and you will not ride to Onawa together.
- If you wish to be together on a bus with others who share your common group name, we assume that you **talked to each other about your departure time before completing your Detail Forms.**
- Several of our team do bus assignments for our shuttles. Don't assume that all of us know who is with whom.
- In short, we need Detail Forms from everyone in your group and identical group names on all applications.
- We'll publish rosters in early July, so you'll know to which bus you're assigned.

- We will also publish a list of names of those whom we cannot assign, due to the lack of information. It's no fun to find your name on the unassigned list. Please complete your Detail Form.
- If you don't have your group's name on your application, or if you have chosen different departure times, please don't assume we can take apart our bus assignments to move you. This affects other people.

Creating/Publishing the Departure Schedule

- For scheduling purposes, we allow at least 45 minutes from the time you land before we assign you to a coach. Even this is a bit tight for claiming your baggage and shuttling from the airport to the hotel.
- We always recommend arriving sometime on Friday or as early Saturday as possible to allow for any possible delays.
- We have constructed the departure schedule around the arrival information and preferences you have given us on your Detail Form, with departures approximately every hour between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when our last bus will roll.
- As usual, we'll send out bus rosters for the entire day and try to minimize anyone having to wait around. Watch for these rosters soon, please.

Bike Transport

- We'll have bike trucks apart from the buses.
- We will have adequate space for both boxed and unboxed bikes.
- It's possible that you may have a little time in Onawa to set up your tent, check in, etc, before the bike truck rolls into camp.
- [See Section entitled Protecting Your Bike for Truck Transport at the end of this letter.]

LAST WARNING ABOUT ARRIVING EARLY

We recommend arriving on Friday, and we've said this many times. Airline problems abound nowadays. If you still plan to arrive Omaha on Saturday afternoon, you may want to give some thought to your plan B—what if your flight is delayed or a bag is lost? Onawa is a little more than an hour north of Omaha.