

Dear Friends,

December 31, 2025



"We do this not because it is easy, but because we thought it would be easy." This saying on the back of our Pork Belly shirts last year seemed to resonate with so many of us, it seemed appropriate to revisit as we're making plans for next year's RAGBRAI. What this reflection doesn't do is explain why so many of us keep coming back, year after year, even though by now we've figured out that it isn't easy. The simple reason is: because it's worth it. When a small town pulls out all the stops to welcome you in some fun and corny way, when a group of church ladies gather to feed you their turkey and noodles, or when you yourself can encourage your pal to keep pedaling just a little further to the top... well, that kind of experience changes you. Whether your goal is to ride every mile, reconnect with old friends, find the best homemade pie in the state, or ride through your old hometown - we hope that you accomplished it, or at least had fun in the process. We've said it for years: RAGBRAI refreshes our faith in humankind, and even in ourselves.

Whatever your motivation or goals for doing RAGBRAI, we heartily invite you to pedal across Iowa with Pork Belly Ventures this July. In this invitation letter, we hope to cover most topics that will help you make your plans and sign up for whichever PBV services are of interest to you.

RAGBRAI begins before dawn on Sunday, July 19th, and ends on Saturday, July 25th. That means that we'll meet up with most of you on Saturday, the 18th, either at Omaha or Des Moines airport hotels, the end-town long-term parking area, or at the PBV campground in the start town. A considerable number of you will fly or drive into Omaha on Friday, July 17th, and stay in one of our designated airport hotels. Most of those using our East/West Shuttle will drive to the end town on Friday, the 17th.

We'll publish the route and daily mileage ASAP after the January 24th Route Announcement, and it will also be updated on RAGBRAI's website and social media.

**Nobody needs this entire letter.** If you won't need a shuttle, for instance, skip over that part. Hang onto this letter for reference, feel free to print it, highlight it, and share with friends who are joining PBV.

If you've already asked your questions and know your plans, you may apply for (most of) our services on or after January 1 (registration site goes live at 6 AM). You'll find our online application at [www.pkbelly.com](http://www.pkbelly.com). Newbies, click the RAGBRAI column, then click "Register."

The fun is in the details, and please keep reading for the juice of what it's like to spend RAGBRAI with the strong and chipper PBV crew! We will return phone calls and respond to emails as quickly as we can. Sometime on or after January 26th, we'll publish more about our shuttles, and of course we'll send regular and timely updates over the course of the season.

Thank you, friends, for considering our RAGBRAI charter, and we will be in touch again soon!

*Your friends on the Pork Belly Ventures team*

*Please email us with any questions at:*

[info@pkbelly.com](mailto:info@pkbelly.com)

*Prefer to chat via phone?*

Pete: 402-681-2613

Tammy: 808-375-8921

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## **SECTION 1: PBV Weeklong and Partial Week Services**

### **What your Weeklong Support Includes: A mostly comprehensive list**

Our goal at PBV is to provide virtually everything you need within our campsites. Most of the following is simply included in our support, but a few services (like massage and laundry) are optional, reasonably priced, and extremely convenient to have available right in camp. Here's the list of what your weeklong (or partial week) support gets you:

- **Transport of two bags per person** from host town to host town (RAGBRAI's baggage transport allows one bag per person).
- **Reserved PBV Campsites** (No navigating the main campground).
- **Hot and Private Showers Daily** (Endless hot water, liquid soap dispensers, and fresh towels on our air-conditioned shower trailers right in camp). PBV has a minimum of 76 stalls in Pork Camp, with a private dressing area for every stall. You can take more than one shower a day if you like, as your PBV wristband admits you to the shower. We clean shower stalls after every use. (Important to say that we close our showers at 8:00 PM. Our crew must load up and roll before dark and drive to the next campsite, as do other portable showers on RAGBRAI.)
- **Well-Placed Kybos** in Camp, provided by the pros at Moores Portables
- **The Royal Flush**, our restroom trailer built by our PBV crew is a more pleasant alternative to the kybos. It offers actual porcelain flushing toilets and urinals, sinks and soap-dispensers, mirrors, ventilation fans, and lighting for your late evening or early-morning trips.
- **Evening Meals in Camp** (3 are included, and 3 are optional for purchase). We work with local caterers in each overnight town.
- **Live Music on Stage Every Night** - From Saturday night to Friday night, we'll have talented musicians on stage--usually from about 6 to 8 PM, during dinner.
- **Shade Canopies and Misting Fans!** Our shady circus tents with chairs provide a place to sit down and join a conversation or listen to the music. You'll also find a misting system--Cool Zone fans-- to refresh you.
- **The PBV Team Shirt** - Be sure to mark your shirt size when you apply online for our Weeklong Support. At check-in, claim your team shirt for 2026.
- **The PBV Team Mug** – Don't forget to grab your Pork Belly mug when you check in, and keep it handy all week for morning coffee and afternoon lemonade.
- **Phone-Charging Trailers** with locking compartments for charging electronic devices. Both trailers will be locked overnight, but charging continues until the trailers are unlocked in the morning, around 5 AM.
- **E-Bike Charging** is of growing interest to our Porkers, and we offer two separate locations – one for those who have a detachable battery and one for those whose

battery is permanently fixed to the bike. Important to note that we don't allow E-Bike battery charging in our regular charging trailers!

- **Our Friendly Front Desk Crew** to Direct and Help! Can't find something? Come to the Front Desk alongside the Roll-With-It trailer. We're here to help!
- **Campsite Orientation Board (COB)** is your daily map of camp. We move every day, and getting oriented to camp is a daily thing! There's no need to stand in line to ask where our equipment is located each day at each new site. This board is always located at one end of our Front Desk trailer. Large maps of each campsite are fixed on a metal display board, with moveable magnetic pieces to direct you to all parts of our infrastructure each day. Upon arrival in camp, check out the COB and get oriented. We also share a photo of the COB in the free Pork Belly app. We'll post each day's activities in camp on our announcement boards, too.
- **Cold Beverages** at the Front Desk, available for purchase at reasonable cost.
- **Free Lemonade** in the afternoon and through dinner.
- **Free Hot Morning Coffee** at Our Coffee Trailer! One awning swings open for coffee service, and another for cream and sugar. Krista starts brewing at 4:30 a.m., six gallons every eight minutes. Hot tea, too.
- **Licensed Massage Therapists** travel with us and have a designated area in each camp. For an additional charge, paid directly to your therapist, you can book 15, 30, or 60 minutes of restorative massage in advance, or hope for a walk-in spot. Our therapists will get your muscles ready for the next day's ride.
- **Sunset Yoga** - Gracie will offer yoga sessions every evening to restore you, body and soul. You don't have to be experienced.... join in!
- **Professional Bike Mechanics**, expert guys and girls, set up in camp daily from 3 PM on to help you with minor repairs. You're welcome to tip, but their service is free for those on our support.
- **Full-Service Bike Shop** in Camp in case you forgot something or have a more major repair. Our partner bike shop is on site after they get off of the daily route, so their schedule varies.
- **PBV's Midweek Laundry Service** - Give us your dirty duds on Tuesday, and we'll give them back to you Wednesday, fresh and folded. This service is optional, for an extra charge of \$35.
- **Breakfast and Lunch Vendors in Camp** - Though vendor offerings aren't included in your Weeklong Support, it's extremely convenient to have a breakfast vendor beside the coffee trailer every morning and a lunch vendor near the showers every afternoon. Sometimes we work with for-profit food vendors, and sometimes non-profits. But this is important to note: Pork Belly Ventures invites LOCAL breakfast and lunch vendors into our campsites, and we work strictly with LOCAL caterers, to benefit our host communities and our riders alike.

- **Indoor Sleeping Opportunities!** We try to arrange indoor sleeping at facilities located in or adjacent to our campground on as many nights of RAGBRAI as possible. It's \$25 per night to sleep inside, a donation that benefits both our hosts and our riders. 100% of this is passed through to the organization providing the space. This is typically a large room where you'll be sharing floor space along with many other Porkers. In 2022, we really lucked out, with all seven nights of indoor sleeping, although that's not usually the case. While schools and churches are most common, we have offered indoor sleeping at college facilities, a theater, and a hockey arena. We'll see how we fare this year!
- **The Water Thingy** has been rebuilt many times over the years. It's our first-ever thingy. Porkers still rely on this RAGBRAI classic for brushing their teeth or filling water bottles. It's a table, plumbed with five spigots and equipped with a mirror on both sides. Use it to cool off. This Thingy is available all day, all night, and in the morning until 7 AM.
- **The Pump Thingy** is a special compressor and pressure regulator to make pumping your tires a breeze. Casey, one of our awesome team of mechanics, will top off tires for you in the morning.
- **Free weeklong storage of your bike case or bike box** (for those who bring a case on the plane or ship the bike to Iowa), storage is free to weeklong Porkers, and is available to those only using our shuttles for an additional charge.
- **Luxury SAG Service** when you need a day off the bike can be a game-changer, and we offer a ride on a comfortable air-conditioned coach from one overnight town to the next. Additional charge of \$40 per use.
- **CPAP Machine Considerations** for those who need it! We will store your CPAP machine in a special place on "Roll With It" to keep it safe from the baggage trailer.
- **Other Needs** - If you don't know who to ask, start at the front desk. There, we have band-aids, a hammer for your stakes, town shuttle maps, just about whatever you need--AND we can find answers for you.
- **PBV Host-Town Maps** sent to you in PDF format, showing our campsites in relationship to other amenities, with GeoBike Elevation Statistics for each RAGBRAI day, and PBV-specific Ride With GPS routes.
- **PBV Locations Card** Our laminated card with campsite locations in each overnight town. You can zip-tie it to your handlebars!
- **Regular informative email updates** to help you plan and prepare, including our comprehensive June Letter with virtually all the info you need in one document.
- **Prompt answers** to your questions via email or phone.
- **The Pork Belly Mobile App** for Smartphones, to help you learn more about our charter and RAGBRAI before the ride, with useful tools like route maps and host-town maps during the ride. Throughout the season, our updates are published and archived on the App. It's FREE--get it now at your App Store.
- **Bike Shipping** to and from Iowa (additional charge). Your shipping label is sent out by email about 10 days before you ship. (More info in the Bike Shipping section below).

## Costs of our Services

- **Weeklong Support for Rider: \$614 per person for the full week**

While you bicycle each day, we will transport your baggage across Iowa, from west to east, providing great campsites, meals (some included and some optional), entertainment, your daily shower and towel fee, and many amenities and support services, described more fully below.

- **Weeklong Support for Non-Rider: \$774 per person for the full week**

This includes everything that the rider package gets, plus daily transportation from one overnight town to the next. Please contact us for a visit about your week.

- **Partial Week with Pork Belly Ventures: \$95 per person per day**

Consecutive days only, includes daily campsite amenities, shower, towel, and entertainment. Contact us if you're unsure about which support days you need to purchase.

- **Child Price for Weeklong Support is \$375 per child**

This option is for kids under 13 years of age, and they must be accompanied by an adult who also has our services, of course.

- **Optional Tent Rental and Daily Set-up: \$605 per tent**

Price is the same for one or two tent occupants, and includes moving of bags (2 per occupant) to/from the tent daily. ***The tent service is available only to those on our Weeklong Support.*** Two riders can share and split the cost of a rental tent, but only one rider should select the tent service on his/her application. Because of high demand, we cannot pro-rate the rental tent service.

## SECTION 2: PBV Shuttles

You won't be able to sign up for shuttles until we know the route of RAGBRAI 2026 and can price our shuttles according to their distances, etc. But - we will give you as much info as we can in this section, to help you determine what shuttle(s) may work for your travel plans.

Please stay tuned after January 24 for another update on shuttle details and pricing. For all shuttles, we use comfortable, quality motor coaches, restroom-equipped and air-conditioned.

NOTE: If you plan to fly into Omaha or Des Moines on Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup> and out of Omaha or Des Moines on Sunday, July 26th, then feel free to make your airline reservations now. BUT, if you hope to fly into an Eastern Iowa Airport, we urge you to *wait* on booking your air travel until after you've received our late-January update on shuttle service locations and departure times. Remember, we won't know which airport we'll be serving on the EAST side of Iowa until we know the route, and we generally do not recommend traveling by air on Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>.

**PLEASE LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS, WHO BOOKED NON-REFUNDABLE AIRFARES WITHOUT KNOWING THE CRITICAL DETAILS.**

### **Pre-RAGBRAI East/West Shuttle, End Town to Start Town on Friday Afternoon or Saturday Morning: Price TBD per person**

If you plan to park your car in the end town prior to RAGBRAI, we'll meet you there either on Friday afternoon (the 17th) or early on Saturday (the 18th) and transport you, your baggage, and your bike to the start town. Our usual departure times are 1:00 and 3:00 PM on Friday, and at 7:00, 8:00, and 9:00 AM on Saturday.

### **Pre-RAGBRAI Omaha Airport to the Start Town on Saturday, various times: Price TBD per person**

This is the most popular airport shuttle. For those who fly or drive into Omaha, this shuttle operates throughout the day until 4:00 on Saturday. On Saturday, the 18th, we'll meet you at the Candlewood Suites hotel parking lot near Omaha's Eppley Airport and transport you, your baggage, and your bike to our campsite in the RAGBRAI start town. We emphatically recommend arriving on Friday, especially if you're traveling by air. We usually have ten or twelve departures with a coach leaving for the start town every hour or so throughout the day on Saturday, from 8 AM to 4 PM. If you ignore our advice and arrive on Saturday, do not plan to arrive by air after 1 PM on Saturday.

### **Pre-RAGBRAI Des Moines to Start Town: Price TBD per person**

The shuttle departs from the Des Moines Holiday Inn airport hotel parking lot. On Saturday, July 18th, it will depart at 9 AM. The post-RAGBRAI shuttle returning to Des Moines will return to this same hotel. Please note that Des Moines is in the central part of the state, not near the start or the finish. This shuttle usually makes sense for those who live nearby in Iowa or Missouri, or who have other reasons for visiting Des Moines.

### **Post-RAGBRAI End Town to Omaha on Saturday after RAGBRAI: Price TBD per person**

On Saturday the 25th, we'll transport you, your baggage, and your bike from the end town to the same Omaha Airport hotel (see Hotel section below), so you can fly or drive home Sunday.

### **Post-RAGBRAI End town to Airport Near End-Town: Price TBD per person**

On Saturday the 25th, after your last day's ride, we'll transport you and your baggage (let us know if you'll have a bike) from the end town to either the Quad Cities International Airport in Moline, IL or to the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids, depending on the location of the end town. We will publish our chosen airport and afternoon shuttle departure times LATER. Please stand by for our late-January update on shuttle details and departure times. *Note: We do not recommend flying out on Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> due to possible ground transportation delays.*

### **Post-RAGBRAI End Town to Des Moines: Price TBD per person**

This shuttle returns to the same Des Moines Holiday Inn airport hotel parking lot that the pre-RAGBRAI shuttle staged from. For the return trip, it departs the end town on Saturday, July 25th, at an afternoon time TBA. Please note that Des Moines is in the south/central part of the state, not near the start or the finish. This shuttle usually makes sense for those who live nearby in Iowa or Missouri, or who have other reasons for visiting Des Moines.

### **Tuesday EXIT Shuttle: Price TBD per person**

This shuttle goes from our campsite on Tuesday afternoon to the Des Moines Holiday Inn airport hotel. This shuttle is for those who ride the first three days, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, and then exit RAGBRAI. We'll publish complete details in our late-January update.

### **Tuesday ENTER Shuttle: Price TBD per person**

This shuttle goes from the Des Moines Holiday Inn airport hotel to our campsite on Tuesday afternoon. This shuttle is for those who enter the ride midweek and cycle Wednesday through Saturday. We'll publish complete details in our late-January update.

### **Wednesday EXIT Shuttle: Price TBD per person**

This shuttle goes from our campsite on Wednesday afternoon to a Des Moines airport hotel, late in the afternoon. This is for those who ride the first four days (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) and then exit RAGBRAI. We'll publish more details in our late-January update.

## SECTION 3: Details about Pork Belly Registration

### Registration With RAGBRAI

PBV (and all RAGBRAI charters) may not serve riders who are not registered for the event. You must register for RAGBRAI in addition to signing up for our services. Charters may not include the RAGBRAI registration with their services.

RAGBRAI registration has been open since mid-November. The cost is \$250 per person starting January 1, with tiered price increases. They are now allowing registration up to the event for a non-refundable \$400 – but it's important to note that some or all of our services may not be available at the later registration dates. (Register or read the price structure for yourself, [HERE](#), and sign up sooner rather than later to save some dough!)

### Registration with PBV

Pork Belly's registration will go live on January 1, 2026. To create a new application, please go to [pkbelly.com](#) and click on the second column, [RAGBRAI Charter](#). Then click the "Register" tab and scroll down to login, entering a username and password. And, importantly, if it's your first time, make sure you tick the box that indicates this is a new application. Then, you'll fill in the blanks, select services, (ENTER CC INFORMATION) and click "Submit." Please contact us with any questions that you have during the registration process.

### How Many Riders on One PBV Application?

Most people like to handle their own applications and payments. They like to set up their own usernames and passwords. Family groups may be an exception. If a family member wishes to manage and pay for everyone on the application, it only makes sense to put everybody on one group application.

If you like, group leaders certainly can sign up several group members on one application, and each group member is able to mail in payment for his/her part of the fees. But given the fact that we require the 10% deposit on a credit card, such a group leader would be on the hook for ten percent of all services on the application. Around May 15th, remaining balances are due, but it's not possible for each person on the application to pay separately with a credit card--or it requires the inconvenience of calling Pete in the office.

If a group leader is willing to pay for everyone and settle up amongst themselves later, it's fine with us. But for simplicity's sake, we recommend that group members complete their own applications and pay their own fees. Please see "Common Group Name" below.

## **Common Group Name for Two or More People**

If two or more friends are joining Pork Belly, you must all put a common group name in the group-name fields on your applications, like "Friends of Henry" or "Cyclopaths." Now is the time to choose your group name and communicate it to all members. Please be sure that all members use the EXACT SAME variation of the name – "The Best Friends" will sort differently from "Best Friends", for example.

No Group Name, Please, for Individuals - It's important to leave the group-name field blank if you're riding RAGBRAI on your own.

## **Securing your Reservation**

Please note: everyone who signs up for services must pay at least ten percent of the balance by credit card in order to have a firm reservation. You will NOT incur a convenience fee on your ten percent deposit that holds your reservation for services. To avoid paying this fee at all, you may mail a check for your remaining balance (see our further explanation below). The full balance will not be due until May 15<sup>th</sup>, but you are welcome to pay prior to that date.

You do not pay credit card processing fees on your initial 10% deposit. After that, it's up to you whether you mail a check for your balance or login to pay by credit card, incurring a 3% fee.

## **Paying for your Remaining Balance**

After your initial 10% deposit, here are your payment options for the remaining balance:

- 1) Pay online with a Credit Card: Anytime between the time that you pay your deposit (early to mid-January) to May 15th, you may login and pay your balance by credit card. For this convenience, a 3% processing fee will be assessed.
- 2) Mail a Check for Remaining Balance: For folks like us who would want to save that 3% service charge, feel free to use the option of mailing a check for your 90% balance. No hurry. Just send it by May 15th to PBV LLC, 412 Forest Glen Drive, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503.

## **PBV Cancellation Policy, Protection, and Non-Refundable Charges**

Please note that if you select our Cancellation Protection, 15% is charged to your credit card when you initially apply. That includes the 10% deposit and 5% for the cancellation protection. Both the deposit and the protection are non-refundable. This has always been the case, but we state it explicitly so there's no misunderstanding. More details below.

## **PBV Cancellation Policy**

Before June 15th, you can still cancel part or all of your PBV services and receive a 90% refund on the amount of services reserved. You can drop services or cancel entirely by email, and we'll process your refund quickly. On or after June 15th, we can make no refunds. More on Cancellation below.

## **PBV Cancellation Protection**

Pork Belly Ventures offers Cancellation Protection for an additional five percent (5%). Cancellation Protection extends your refund deadline from June 15th to Wednesday, July 16th at 10:00 p.m. The additional 5% for protection is due at the time of registration. Our Cancellation Protection is explained fully at [pkbelly.com](http://pkbelly.com). More on Cancellation Protection below.

## **Non-Refundable Charges**

We want to draw your attention to the non-refundable charges, not hide them from you. The first ten percent (10%) can be paid by credit card, and is non-refundable as stated in our cancellation policy. The five-percent (5%) charge for our optional cancellation protection extends the 90% refund deadline from June 15 to July 15th. It is also non-refundable.

## **Difference between Selecting and Reserving Services**

Selecting services on your application without paying the deposit doesn't give you a reservation, even though the information is retained on your application.

Everyone who completes an application and pays his/her ten percent by credit card (or by mailing a check) will have a firm reservation with PBV.

When you submit payment or when we process your payment, you will receive a confirmation email, showing your payment and any remaining balance. Balances are due in full by May 15th.

## **The Whole Scoop on Cancellation Protection**

First of all, if you have any trouble understanding this option, you should call or email us for an explanation. You have only one opportunity to purchase this protection, at the time of your original registration.

Here are some of the things that have happened to our RAGBRAIers during the last month before RAGBRAI. A member of their family has needed support through a crisis. People have been struck by a car while training for the ride. Their plans for childcare have fallen through. They have lost a loved one. The boss decided they couldn't be spared at work. They have been diagnosed with an illness. Although we--and every other tour operator--must have a refund deadline and cancellation policy, and although ours is quite liberal, and even though we

publish our cancellation policy several times prior to the deadline every year, we can't help but feel for those people who cancelled out of necessity after the June deadline. After attending a conference of bicycle tour directors and discussing this issue with other tour operators, we offer this solution.

In short, it's up to you whether to protect yourself against these and other situations that may prevent you coming to join us on RAGBRAI.

If you want to extend your 90% refund from June 15th all the way through until July 15th, you can select "Cancellation Protection" on the online application form. The non-refundable fee for this protection is five percent of the value of services you have reserved with PBV--all services on your application. (One exception: cancellation protection does not apply to the PHAT Room Accommodations.)

This protection applies only to the period from June 15 to July 15 at 10:00 p.m. For anyone who cancels later than 10:00 p.m. on July 15th, we make no refund. This protection is not applicable to people who travel to Iowa for RAGBRAI and leave the ride early for any reason. This protection applies only to fees paid to Pork Belly Ventures, not your RAGBRAI registration fee or other travel expenses. To use this protection, you must contact us by email by 10:00 p.m. on July 15. Your refund will be processed at our earliest convenience, possibly in the early days of August, if your cancellation comes at the last moment.

In short, without protection, you stand to lose 100% of your fees paid to PBV. But by spending 5% up front on a non-refundable fee, you can receive a 90% refund if you cancel for any reason all the way through July 15 at 10 PM. ***You may purchase this protection at the original time of registration only.***

### **Lost/Stolen Property**

Whether you're using your own tent or our tent, we do not accept responsibility for lost or stolen property during RAGBRAI. We're sorry to have to state it this way, friends, and we have had many, many years without theft. A few years ago, we had a single incident that has prompted us to make this new policy. We will be as diligent as ever as we move your baggage and provide your support, but we are not responsible for lost or stolen property.

Feel free to call Pete (402-681-2613) to discuss the cancellation policy or any other questions about registration. We want to make sure that everyone understands our policies before they may need to use them.

## **SECTION 4: All about Travel: Air Transportation, Hotels, Parking, and Bike Shipping**

### **Air Transportation**

Wondering when you should make airline reservations? In short, it's probably best to wait for the update from Pork Belly Ventures on Shuttle Details and Departure Times (the last week in January). It takes us a little time to think about how the route affects each shuttle and communicate with the bus companies, etc. Our shuttle update will cover all the shuttle details and departure times. Once you know our shuttle departure times, you can make your airline reservations with confidence that you can make your connections. Feel free to call Pete (402-681-2613) to discuss logistics for getting to/from RAGBRAI. We really want to be sure that you make the best plan for you while considering all available options.

### **Pre- and Post-RAGBRAI Overnight Accommodations**

#### **In the End Town Before RAGBRAI**

If you're using our East/West Shuttle from the End Town to the Start Town, you may be interested in staying in a hotel room the Friday before RAGBRAI. For hotel rooms in eastern Iowa near the end town, you may check the end-town website on about May 1st for nearby hotels, or you might Google hotels relatively close to long-term parking. PBV will not have a designated hotel in eastern Iowa. Regardless, you'll want to wait until the route is announced so you know what town we'll be ending in, and where to search for hotels.

Camping is also always available on Friday night in the end town, usually announced by the town in May. Just as during the week, Pork Belly Ventures attempts to find inexpensive indoor camping in the end town for those using our shuttles on Saturday. We have reserved church facilities, gymnasiums, schools, dorms, YMCAs, and other large rooms, where folks could make a small donation to roll out their sleeping bags indoors and relatively close to long-term parking. Again this year, we will make every effort to arrange inexpensive indoor accommodations.

#### **In Omaha Before/After RAGBRAI**

On the nights of July 18th through the 24th, you will be camping with PBV, but if you're flying into Omaha on Friday, the 17th, and/or returning with us to Omaha late on Saturday evening, the 25th, you will need Omaha hotel reservations. We will have room blocks for both nights at two side-by-side airport hotels.

All Pork Belly buses will depart from and return to the Omaha airport Candlewood Suites, next door to the Best Western Plus. Both are across the street from a large convenience store, Subway sandwich shop, and Perkins Restaurant (with breakfast all day and other options). You can work with your respective hotel to secure very reasonable weeklong hotel parking, arranged between you and your hotel on the day.

**Best Western Plus** - Call the local number: 402-505-4900.

Mention our name to reserve your king or double queen room, \$147 plus tax per night. Hot breakfast, a swimming pool, and Triple-sheeting is the standard at this hotel. We hear they will have a complete remodel between now and July!

**Candlewood Suites** - Call the local number: 402-342-2500.

Mention our name to reserve your king or double queen room, \$142 plus tax per night. The north side of Candlewood is the site of our bus loading and unloading (Best Western Plus guests walk over and back.) No breakfast is offered to Candlewood guests, but there is a great convenience store off the hotel lobby or you can buy breakfast nearby. Free laundry service to guests, Hospitality areas available to our guests before and after RAGBRAI, Triple-sheeting is the standard at this hotel.

**We advise flying or driving in on Friday.** Saturday is part of the RAGBRAI experience, and you miss it (and maybe your shuttle!) when you fly into Omaha at 1 PM. You'll want to enjoy the big bike expo on Saturday, the festivities, and a town filling up with people and bikes. Also, we have seen some things in our time, including delayed flights, cancelled flights, closed airports, and lost luggage--which can cause a rider to miss their shuttle to the start town. When you fly in on Friday, you hedge your bets against most of the problems an airline can cause.

Feel free to call Pete (402-681-2613) to discuss logistics for getting to/from RAGBRAI. We really want to be sure that you make the best plan for you while considering all available options.

### **In Des Moines Before/After RAGBRAI**

On the nights of July 18th through the 24th, you will be camping with PBV, but if you're flying into Des Moines on Friday, the 17th, and/or returning with us to Des Moines and flying out on Sunday, the 26th, you will need Des Moines hotel reservations. All Pork Belly shuttle buses will depart from and return to the Des Moines Holiday Inn airport hotel.

**Holiday Inn Conference Center** - Call the local number: 515-287-2400.

Mention our name to reserve your king or double queen room, \$129 plus tax per night. On-site restaurant, airport shuttle, pool, fitness center, laundry, and hospitality areas available to our guests before/after RAGBRAI. You may arrange for weeklong parking directly with the hotel.

## Parking During RAGBRAI

### Weeklong Parking at the End Town

One of the first things an end-town figures out is how to securely park hundreds of cars for the week. The host committee will make a good plan for this. Our bike-loading and bus-boarding area for the east/west shuttle is typically located very near the long-term parking area. Hold tight and watch our updates. We are optimistic that we'll have this info for you prior to May 1. Camping, dining, and showers are also often provided in the end town on the Friday night before RAGBRAI.

### Weeklong Parking in Omaha

The hotels will offer inexpensive long-term parking in their lots to those who spend a night there (negotiated between you and them), or there are nearby parking lot options at the airport.

### Weeklong Parking in Des Moines

If you're using the Des Moines shuttle, we will stage at the Des Moines Holiday Inn hotel near the airport. You can work with the hotel for weeklong parking or a nearby airport parking lot.

## Bike Shipping

*[For us, "shipping" means purchasing a label and packing your bike up to send to and from Iowa. Shipping is not to be confused with transporting bikes. We transport bikes on all RAGBRAI shuttles, included with the cost of your shuttle.]*

Pork Belly Ventures has been the best ground game on RAGBRAI for many years, and we have done the lion's share of bike shipping to and from RAGBRAI. We will continue to partner with Bike Flights to provide bike shipping to and from RAGBRAI, and you'll receive your emailed label 10 days prior to your ship date.

Along with our partners at Bike Flights, we're working on a plan to keep your costs down and give you excellent service. We'll let you know when you can register, likely in early April. We'll continue to offer the popular option of having your shipped bike pre-assembled before you arrive in Iowa.

Alternatives to shipping include flying with your bike, driving your bike to Iowa, and renting a bike in Iowa.

## SECTION 5. Other Important Questions

### **What does it take to be a Porker?**

We want you to have a good time, and here's what helps you do that. It's hard to overstate the importance of training for RAGBRAI. Every mile you ride before RAGBRAI will increase the quality of your days in Iowa. If you have the ability to take things in stride and let the temporary stuff roll off your back, if you have a good sense of humor, and if you like to be around people, then you'll love RAGBRAI with PBV! We can get you showered and cooled down and fed and rested, but you might endure some temporary discomfort. When that happens--and surely it will--please treat those who serve you with respect and courtesy. We are going to do our very best to show you a great time. Remember that the vibe of our charter is "neighborhood block party," not "college frat party." With us, you're signing on for wholesome, healthy fun and a quiet campsite after 10 PM. If you want a hard party or a late party, we're not the right fit for you.

### **Who is Pork Belly Ventures LLC?**

We are a small family-owned business, started by brother and sister team of Pete Phillips and Tammy Pavich, who were born and raised in Iowa. Last year, we completed our 32nd year of operating our RAGBRAI charter. We and our extended family live in Council Bluffs, on Iowa's west coast. Our charter is best known for our Weeklong Support, full of extras and relative luxuries, described in greater detail above. We take pride in Iowa's hospitality and the kindness of people you'll meet all across our home state.

We couldn't get a mile down the road without our incredible crew. The Pork Belly crew stays strong and chipper all week long, and during the waking hours, you can always find someone to ask for help. Many are schoolteachers, farmers, and firefighters. About the only way to join our crew is to be recommended by another crew member--so we are a great big web of schoolmates, neighbors, cousins, and friends, everyone connected somehow.

Among our riders, you'll find many professions and many lifestyles, ethnicities, and cultures--most from the U.S., but quite a few from beyond. Most of our charter is thirties, forties, fifties, and sixties, but we appreciate the very fit men and women in their seventies and even eighties, many of whom have been riding for many years with us. You'll meet some youngsters, too, and plenty of people who sign up this year will be riding their very first RAGBRAI. Let's all welcome and help them! Under our canopies, you can join any number of interesting conversations! Our riders are a friendly bunch. First-timers and RAGBRAI veterans alike pass the corn with us.

### **Can I ride RAGBRAI without the support of a charter?**

Yes, you can, but many riders like to have a friendly home base where they don't need to worry about the details. If our prices don't suit your budget, we're happy to recommend another reliable charter to transport your baggage, provide campsites, and support you during your Iowa adventure. Every charter has its own amenities, found on their page at [RAGBRAI.com](http://RAGBRAI.com).

## **Why Use Pork Belly Ventures?**

The Weeklong Support of PBV could mean the difference between a complicated, exhausting bike trip and a carefree athletic adventure. And it includes amenities (shower, towel, meals, coffee, t-shirt) that you'll likely be paying for no matter how you do RAGBRAI.

Our riders like to focus on their miles and enjoy their Week in the Corn. They rely on us for the little village they call home. They may choose to explore the overnight towns, but if they're tired at the end of a long hot road, they can find their shower, snacks and locally catered meals, cold drinks, an electrical outlet, a shady social area, friendly bike mechanics, restorative yoga and massage therapy, and some excellent live music-- right in camp!

Some of our riders are dealing with a medical issue and appreciate an extra level of support. We can refrigerate medication, provide help for those with CPAP machines--with limits--and charge e-bike batteries. We offer a comfortable (and legal) option for sagging on any given day of RAGBRAI.

## **What's included in Pork Belly Ventures' Tent Rental and Daily Set-up?**

Tent-renters simply pack up their bags in the morning and leave them inside the tent. In the next host town you'll find your tent up with bags inside. You can catch your breath under canopies, grab a bite from one of our food vendors, or head off to the shower.

Our rental tents are 63 square feet (8.5' L X 7.5' W X 55" H). With duffels inside, we consider our tent a roomy for one person and cozy for two. You can share it and split the cost, or you can occupy it alone.

We'll set up Tent City on the same grid every day. Address cards will help you locate yours. We're happy to arrange the grid so that friends are next door to each other (but you'll need a common group name on all applications). This service has sold out quickly in the past.

**Hours of Access to Your Rental Tent:** We'll aim for set-up by 1 PM. each day, but we always warn that town-to-town traffic or inclement weather might put our crew a bit behind. If you usually arrive very early in camp, we don't recommend using the tent service--you'll be happier if you just set up your own tent on your own schedule.

We include this paragraph, Porkers, so that there will be no misunderstandings about our Rental Tent Service. We will set up the tent grid on an average piece of real estate within our campsite. Please understand that it will not necessarily be the best part of our campsite, but it might. On most days, Tent City will not be the shadiest part of our campsite. On some days, Tent City will be very close to our amenities, and on other days you might walk a across the campsite to use showers or the charging trailers or other services. You'll find your tent location more convenient on some days than others.

We don't recommend three to a rental tent unless one or more occupant is a child, and there's an extra charge of \$100 for handling the third person's baggage.

### **What if I want to bring my own tent?**

By all means, bring it! Those who bring their own tents do their own set-up and take-down and carry their bags to and from their tents. More than half of our Porkers use their own tents. We'll carry your gear (a maximum of two bags per person) from town to town, where you'll claim and return it daily to our baggage truck location. We'll have plenty of camping space for everyone. If you set up your own tent, you'll have more choices of where to camp (versus your fixed spot on our large grid of rental tents).

### **May I book shuttles now?**

Not quite yet. We need the route of RAGBRAI to plan and price our many shuttles. The 2026 route will be announced on January 24th, and very soon after, we'll publish an invitation to sign up for shuttles. Any RAGBRAI riders may use our shuttles, whether or not they are spending the week with PBV. If any of our shuttles would become tight on space, we'll communicate that info during the season.

### **What if I want a day off the bike?**

Whether you have an injury, need a rest, or you're just not into riding today, we offer a DOT-compliant SAG service every day, namely 56-passenger motor coach and driver. Our SAG is a convenient, comfortable, and secure way for you and your bike to get to the next overnight town. We'll transport bikes on a specially outfitted trailer. You'll depart each day at 7 AM, and you'll be in our new camp by about 9:30 AM. The seats are soft, and you can doze all the way to our next campsite. Please just keep in mind that Pork Camp won't be fully functional when you arrive – you'll likely beat some of our equipment to the next town.

Remember, please, that we have 56 seats. On some days, we can have our driver make two trips to accommodate more passengers. It's not practical to have this coach make a third trip, as most or all riders are resourceful enough to find a way to the next overnight town before mid-afternoon.

(There's a special price for non-cyclists spending the full week with us. If you don't bring a bike at all, please see our Weeklong Non-Rider service, which includes your daily transfer from town to town on a luxury motor coach.)

### **Suppose I can only ride half the week?**

Our day rate for support is \$95 per person per day, and you must spend consecutive days with us. We'll publish more about the Midweek Enter and Exit Shuttles in our next update. (Partial-week riders need to purchase RAGBRAI's day passes for each day they will cycle.)

### **Confused about Shuttles?**

We don't expect you to know the geography of Iowa and where the best airports are for your trips to/from Iowa. Just write or call, and we'll talk through your options. Contact us, please, after the route is announced and before you make airline reservations. We will tell you much more about our shuttles in the next few FAQs and in our next update about shuttles. Feel free

to call Pete (402-681-2613) to discuss logistics for getting to/from RAGBRAI. We really want to be sure that you make the best plan for you while considering all available options.

### **What's the advantage of booking a round trip into and out of Omaha?**

Omaha is on the western edge of Iowa, and it's the closest international airport to most start towns on this west-to-east ride. This is our most popular airport shuttle, convenient for those who fly, but also for those who drive in on I-80 or I-29.

With our round-trip Omaha service, we pretty much take care of you from the time you reach baggage claim in Omaha to the time you step off our bus at your Omaha airport hotel on the evening of the 25th. Make your air and hotel reservations, and register with PBV. (See Section 3 for Pork Hotels at the Omaha airport.) We'll meet you at the Omaha airport (or hotel parking lot) and deliver you to the start town on a nice motor coach. At the end of RAGBRAI, climb aboard our Omaha-bound coach. We'll carry you back to our side-by-side airport hotels. On Sunday, the free hotel shuttle will take you to the airport.

### **At the end of RAGBRAI, what are my transportation options with PBV?**

We can take you to the Des Moines Holiday Inn airport hotel, or we can take you to our side-by-side hotels at the Omaha airport. Finally, we can shuttle you to an airport on Iowa's east side (TBD when we know the route). We will publish all shuttle details and departure times in a late January update.

### **What are the shuttle departure times?**

We'll publish a separate update soon with estimated departure times on all shuttles. On Saturday, July 18th, our last shuttle from Omaha airport is likely to depart at 4:00 p.m. It's wise not to make airline reservations until we have published shuttle departure times. Watch for our next update!

### **What is the advantage of using the PBV East/West Shuttle?**

This shuttle allows you to park at the end town and shuttle across Iowa to the start. For those who live east of Iowa and/or within driving distance of the end town, this shuttle is a good choice. On Friday the 17th (or earlier), you park your car in the designated long-term parking (the end-town will charge a parking fee; see their website in the spring). You may also drive into the end town very early on Saturday--but plan for traffic congestion that morning. Our crew will meet you there for bike loading on Friday around noon and/or early on Saturday. By mid to late afternoon on Saturday, we'll have you and your bike in the start town. At the end of RAGBRAI, you're back at your car and can depart at your convenience.

### **Will PBV Run the East/West Shuttle on Friday as well as on Saturday Morning?**

Yes, Friday afternoon continues to be a popular choice, and we will continue to offer it. Those who shuttle on Friday get ahead of the fray and check in for PBV support early, before it gets busy. These folks have more time to enjoy the huge bike expo and start-town festivities on Saturday. You have some time to think about which departure date and time is best for you

and your friends. When you sign up, we'll ask you to choose Friday afternoon (usually two departure options) or Saturday morning (three departure options). Watch for our late January update for firm departure times.

### **What if I don't even bike but want to experience RAGBRAI?**

We offer weeklong support for non-riders. A handful of people participate as non-riders with our charter every year. Often they have a family member who is cycling with our charter. We'll carry non-riders on our 56-passenger motor coach from overnight town to overnight town. To arrange to join PBV as a non-rider, please contact us. We would like to visit with you about your week and what to expect.

### **May we bring our car or RV with PBV?**

No, you may not. Whether or not they have secured the RAGBRAI vehicle pass, neither riders nor non-riders may bring their own vehicles if they are using our services. RAGBRAI also prohibits those using the support of charters from bringing along a personal vehicle.

### **Will PBV communicate with me between now and July?**

You bet, and we'll have an update to you later in January about our shuttles. Between now and June, we'll send a couple of updates a month. In the last 60 days, we'll write more frequently.

### **What if I have a problem or a special situation?**

Tell us what you need, and we'll try to help.

### **What should I do right now?**

First, feel free to ask your questions. We welcome anyone to jot down a list of questions or concerns, and then call us. We look forward to talking with you!

If you feel that you understand our cancellation policy and our cancellation protection, then by all means, go to [pkbelly.com](http://pkbelly.com) anytime after January 1, then click the RAGBRAI Register tab to create a new application. If you are signing up for the first time, you'll create your username and password--and remember to tick the box that indicates you're creating brand new login credentials.

### **Thank you for considering Pork Belly Ventures.**

We're here to answer your questions, Porkers! We can talk shuttles, services, prices, and whatever you need for your Week in the Corn. Please email or call, whichever is best for you. (Limited availability on New Year's Day)

*Your friends on the Pork Belly Ventures team*

*Please email us with any questions at:*

[info@pkbelly.com](mailto:info@pkbelly.com)

*Prefer to chat via phone?*

Pete: 402-681-2613

Tammy: 808-375-8921