

JOS State (NY)
Formation Skydiving
12way

Skydive The Falls, Youngstown, NY
26 Aug 2023

Jumpers:

Rick Poplinger George Nisson David Benjamin Ben Wong Harold White
“Mad” John Dobleman Doug Garr Marshall Madden John Miller
Russ Manhold Johnny Dalessio Johnny Bateman

POPS State (OH):
Sequential Formation Skydiving: 2pt 14way

At: Aerohio, Ashland, OH - 26 Aug 2023

Video: <https://youtu.be/xYPo1YSfI2M>



Senior skydivers coming to Niagara County

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Skydiving is certainly not for everyone, but those who like it are hooked for life.

That is the case for a group of at least 30 senior citizens this week, when Jumpers over Seventy arrive in Niagara County. Skydive the Falls in Youngstown will provide the means to get up that high.

Organized by Lockport resident John Benoit, some of them will try to break a state record for most people over 70 in a skydiving formation with 13. Along with a videographer recording the jump, that is the maximum amount their plane can hold.

"The average experience level of these guys is 5,000 jumps," Benoit said, himself

having skydived 2,500 times. "Most of these guys have made more jumps than I have."

The previous records was set at this same event for the past two years, with last year's attempt having 12. These skydivers are accustomed to breaking records, some of them part of a 60-person formation over California and a 75-person formation over Chicago.

These senior divers are traveling across North America, from California, New York City, New Jersey, Maryland, Texas, Wisconsin, Ohio, Georgia, Florida and Vancouver, B.C. A half a dozen of them are from Western New York between Buffalo and Rochester. At least 20 of them are over the age of 70 with a subgroup of them under the age of 60.

"Most of these guys started in the '60s and '70s and never stopped," Benoit said, himself starting to jump in the 1970s but did not jump for 20 years while raising four children, before starting again in 2003. "If you talk to every individual, they'll have a different story."

Starting on 10 a.m. Thursday, most of these jumpers will make three jumps apiece. Their plane will go up to around 12,500 feet, with Skydive the Falls making sure that every group gets a view of Niagara Falls, before jumping. These jumps are also weather dependent.

The fall lasts between four to five minutes, one minute and 15 seconds in freewill and two to three minutes once the parachute has been deployed.

The record-breaking 13-per-

son jump will take place on Saturday, with the jumpers planning on landing at Benoit's backyard for a picnic. Aside from that, most of the formations will be 6- or 7-way formations.

Benoit said this state record only has limited attempts because of the size of aircraft for skydiving and limited opportunities in New York state. This is the only such skydiving event for seniors in the state.

But that record is secondary to the camaraderie of this activity.

"It's mostly 70- and 80-year-old people that have been jumping together for years," Benoit said. "They gather to fly over Niagara Falls, see some local sites, and jump together."

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