

Ballooning Terms:

When you hear a hot air balloon pilot say “envelope” are you picturing a stamp or a post office? If so, read below to familiarize yourself with some key ballooning jargon....

Aeronaut – This refers to the wonderful group of volunteers that help make sure the Race goes off without a hitch. They dedicate a lot of hours to make sure the Balloon Race is enjoyable for everyone. So if you see one, say thanks.

Basket – A hot air balloon basket is quite simply, the thing you ride in. More specifically, it is made out of cane and rattan and woven by a craftsman. There are stainless steel wires that create a frame and provide a strong cradle for riders.

Briefing – Refers to the information including weather, wind speed, direction, competition instructions and safety instructions given to a pilot before, during and after flight. GRBR pilots attend a pilot briefing each morning of the Race.

Burners – The heat source for a hot air balloon that controls the balloon’s vertical movement. They are fueled with propane and are controlled by an on/off valve.

Crew – A pilot’s crew is essential to the successful flight of a hot air balloon. The crew helps with take off and landing and provides critical ground support to the pilot.

Envelope – The most beautiful of all the ballooning terms, this refers to the vibrant, colorful part of a balloon that inflates. Most envelopes at this year’s race hold between 77,000 to 105,000 cubic feet of air inside. That is the same amount of air that would fill 4 to 7 - 2,000 sq. ft. homes! Which one is your favorite?

Special Shape Balloons – Balloons manufactured to look like animals or products instead of the traditional shape. There are always special shape balloons the Balloon Race. See if you can spot them all.

Tether lines/ropes – These are very important pieces of equipment used to anchor a balloon to the ground while it is inflated and staying in one spot. Take a look at the Children’s Cabinet’s “tethered” rides in the Old McDonald’s Farm balloon.