



## **LEGENDS OF THUNDER VALLEY**

### **BRUTON SMITH**

Bruton Smith literally moved mountains to transform Bristol Dragway into the impressive facility it is today.

The original track, then known as Bristol International Dragway, opened in 1965 and, at the time, was considered one of the best in the country.

After several ownership changes, Bruton Smith, who also had purchased Bristol Motor Speedway, bought Bristol International Dragway in 1996 and renamed it Bristol Dragway.

After the 1997 season, Bristol Dragway closed and work began on a new \$18 million facility, a track now considered the standard for NHRA venues. Smith, who put much effort into the growth of Bristol Motor Speedway, did the same for Bristol Dragway. No expense was spared and the results speak for themselves.

Almost one million cubic yards of earth was moved in order to create a larger pit area and better fan amenities and grandstands. Two pedestrian tunnels allow fans to move easily from the grandstands to the pit area during on-track events. More than 20 miles of cable for power, communication and scoring are buried to preserve the beauty of the setting. To provide for exciting nighttime racing, a \$500,000 Musco sports lighting system was installed.

Under Smith's guidance, Bristol Dragway, much like the speedway located across Beaver Creek, has become a favorite facility among drivers and fans. With picturesque views, fan-friendly atmosphere and thrilling racing action, it is obvious why spectators from across the nation, and the world, come to Thunder Valley.

For his role in the reconstruction of Bristol Dragway, track officials honored Bruton Smith as a Legend of Thunder Valley during the 2007 NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals.