Smokey and the Bandit turns 45!
By Chris Winslow

OK. Admittedly there were no GTOs prominently featured in the movie *Smokey and the Bandit*. But, it has to be the most iconic movie ever made starring a Pontiac.

This year marks 45 years since the movie was first released in May of 1977. In recognition of that anniversary, Turner Classic Movies has brought it back to theaters. Marty Howard found out about this and organized a Gateway GTO Movie Night at the AMC Theater in Chesterfield on May 29th.

During the introduction by the movie by TCM, they noted how different movies were in those days. Here we have a movie that is essentially a 90 minute car chase based on two guys bootlegging a semi full of Coors beer from Texarkana Texas to Atlanta Georgia. They just don't make movies with plots that simple any more.

The group from Gateway that attended included Steve and Tammy Hedrick, Jim and Shelly Schneider, Marty, of course, and also Paula and I were there.

Actually, Paula and I had just seen the movie a week earlier at the Skyview drive in, but I was still looking forward to seeing it again on the big screen complete with all of the original language from Sheriff Buford T. Justice. In anticipation of the movie, and wanting to have something appropriate to wear, I had actually purchased a new T-Shirt that I thought would be the hit of the event. Little did I know I was about to be upstaged big time!

Shortly after we arrived at the theater and were getting some snacks, in walks Steve and Tammy and Steve is sporting his full up Buford T Justice costume. He had the look down complete with the 10 gallon hat and even the same medal under the Buford T. Justice nametag!

We all had a great time. This movie is a lot of fun and takes you back to a time before cell phones and GPS systems. We actually have the DVD that we can watch at home anytime, but it is just not the same as seeing it on the big screen. Hopefully they will bring it back for another round in 2027 for the 50th anniversary!