

University Rover Challenge 2018

A photograph of a desert landscape with a sign that reads "URC" in large, orange, outlined letters. The sign is on a white background and is supported by two thin metal poles. The background shows a vast, flat, reddish-brown desert floor with some low, rounded hills in the distance under a clear blue sky.

URC

TRAVEL TIPS



Getting To Hanksville, Utah

Flying

There are three “nearby” airports that are the most convenient for travel:

- Grand Junction (GJT)*, located about 2.5 hours east of Hanksville
- Salt Lake City (SLC) located about 4 hours north of Hanksville
- Las Vegas (LAS) located about 6.5 hours southwest of Hanksville
- *Grand Junction is a regional airport, while Salt Lake City and Las Vegas are international airports. Most times, international airports are cheaper to fly into.



Driving

The roads within the region of Hanksville are extremely remote (especially the drive from the town of Hanksville into the MDRS competition site). It is not uncommon to drive 100 miles or more between gas stations. Here are some tips:

Rental vehicle – A small to medium sized SUV is ideal to manage the terrain surrounding the Mars Desert Research Station. If not available, a durable 4 to 5 passenger car should suffice if driven carefully.

Gas – An excellent rule of thumb – never pass a gas station unless you can make it an-other 150 miles. Some teams have ran out of gas on the way before.

Directions – Google map directions to your hotel in Hanksville, Utah ahead of time. Best practices would be to print out directions from your airport to your hotel, as well as bring a GPS! Your final destination should be your hotel – hotel addresses are found near the end of this URC Guide:



- **Las Vegas** – Most common route from Las Vegas Airport is to take I-15N out of Las Vegas and drive approximately 200 miles until you reach UT-20E in Utah. You can follow the UT-20E, onto the US-89N, then UT-62 and eventually UT-24E, which brings you to Main St. in Hanksville.
- **Salt Lake City** – Most common route from Salt Lake City Airport is to take I-15S out of Salt Lake City and follow the US-6E (for about 190 miles) until you reach the I-70W, from which you then follow until you reach UT-24W to head straight into Main St. Hanksville.
- **Grand Junction** – Most common route from Grand Junction Airport is to take the I-70W out of Grand Junction until you reach UT-24W (which takes about 115 miles) which will then take you right onto Main St. Hanksville.

Getting to the competition site:

Check out this YouTube video showing the all-terrain drive from Hanksville to the competition site at the Mars Desert Research Station.

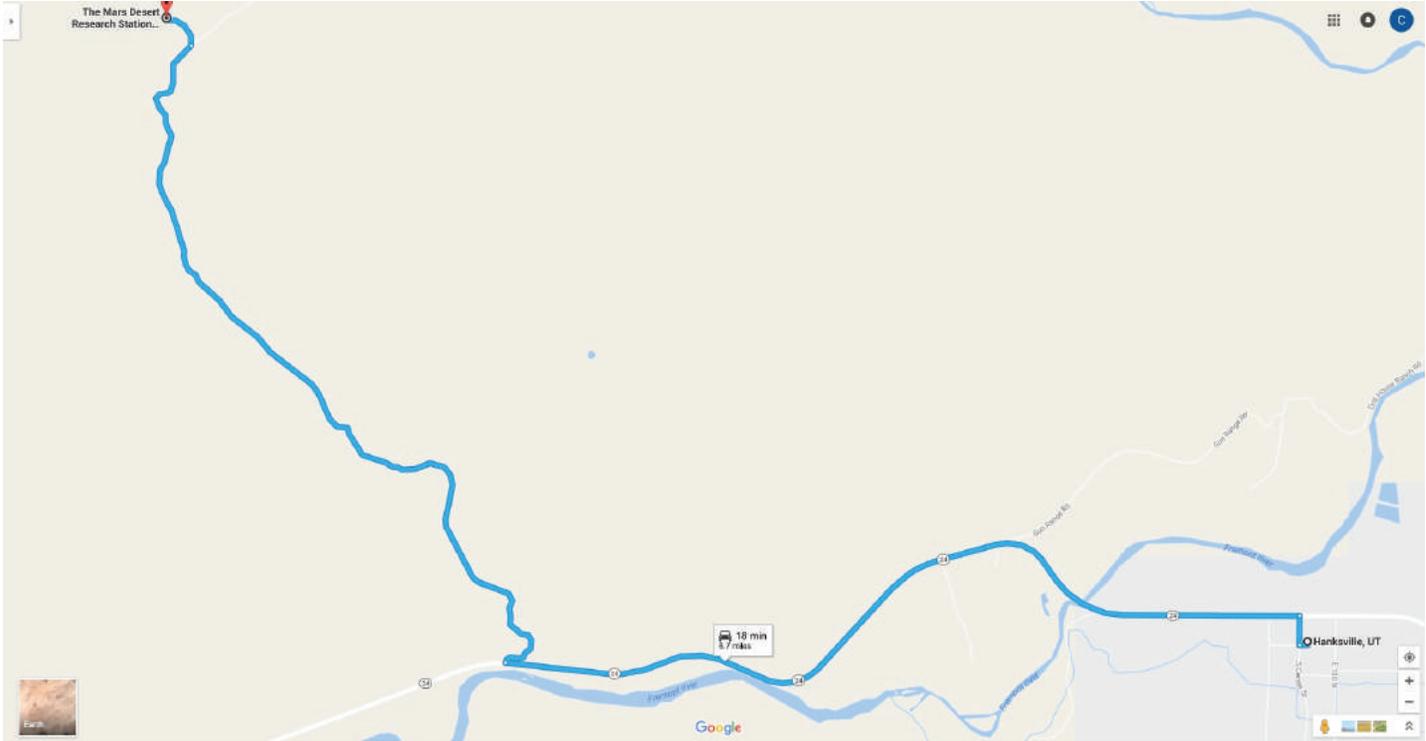
- If you can, take advantage of the driving tour that is given by the URC staff on the afternoon of May 30th (during team registration) to know where to go!

If you arrive late and/or cannot make it to the driving tour that is provided, take note of the following directions:

- From main street in Hanksville, head west on UT-24W and after approximately 3.75 miles (just past mile marker 113), turn right onto a dirt road, called Cow Dung Road. There's actually no sign for this road Follow this road until you reach the MDRS satellite house. For a better look, check out the below images from Google Maps or check out the interactive map here.



Getting to the competition site:



Email: Info@Protocase.com



Email: Kevin@MarsSociety.org



Accommodations

URC reserves blocks of rooms at various hotels made available to teams on a limited basis following the results of the System Acceptance Review milestone. However, teams are required to look after their own accommodation bookings. Here are the hotel options in the surrounding areas:

Whispering Sands Motel

3.9 mi East of MDRS turn off
<http://www.whisperingsandsmotel.com>
435-542-3238
90 So. Highway 95 - Hanksville, UT 84734

Hanksville Inn

3.6 mi East of MDRS turn off
<http://www.hanksvilleinn.com>
435-542-3471
280 East 100 North - Hanksville, UT 84734

Duke's Slickrock Campground

3.6 mi East of MDRS turn off
280 East 100 North - Hanksville, UT 84734
<http://www.dukesslickrock.com/>
435-542-3235

Rodeway Inn – Capitol Reef

14 mi West of MDRS turn off
<http://www.rodewayinn.com/hotel-caineville-utah-UT151>
435-456-9900
25 East State Route 24 - Caineville, UT 84775

There are several options available for lodging in Torrey, UT and Green River, UT which are approximately 45-60 miles outside of Hanksville.



Food/Beverage

Hanksville is a small town with a population of less than 250 people. Hours of operation vary for the businesses, which most in the town are “family-run”.

- For groceries and miscellaneous items, there is Bull Mountain Market (30 Utah 24 -Hanksville, UT 84734 - 435-542-3249), but hours of operation may vary.
- For restaurants, the options are Stan’s Burger Shack , Blondie’s Eatery & Gifts and Duke’s Slickrock Grill. During the busy period of University Rover Challenge, these restaurants need to accommodate 300-400. Tip: Be prepared to wait, as the wait times may vary during peak times, such as lunch and supper.
- To make sure you are equipped with enough food and water for the 4-5 days of travel-ing plus completion, be prepared before you even make the trek to Hanksville.
- Depending on which direction you are coming from, check out the last Target or Walmart stop to pick up a cheap cooler, jugs/bottles of water, granola/protein bars and any essentials (especially non-perishables) that you can take with you.
- Most gas stations in Hanksville sell ice. Most accommodations in Hanksville include a mini-fridge for extra food storage.

Tip: Purchase a hydration pack – they do wonders when you are constantly busy and on the run!



Clothing

It can get extremely hot in Hanksville, temperatures can reach upwards of 100 degrees F at the MDRS competition site. The competition takes place in a very wide, open space, with little to no shade.

Tip #1: Many athletics or sports apparel stores sell cooling shirts/pants that keep the cold inside.

Tip #2: Pack 1-2 light-colored long-sleeve cooling shirts – they'll help keep you cool while also protecting you from the sun.

- Bring sunscreen, and apply it frequently.
- Bring items for shade (a canopy is ideal, but at the bare minimum, wear a wide-brimmed hat). Keep in mind that winds at the MDRS can be very high.
- Light-coloured clothing is best – especially long sleeve, lightweight shirts.
- Bring sunglasses!

URC has a great safety notice PDF [here](#).



Enjoy the Experience

Most of all, the biggest tip we can give is to **enjoy the experience of URC 2018**. Being at the Mars Desert Research Station is a unique and rewarding experience in itself. Most people are not accustomed to being as remote as you are. With all of the hard work and effort that goes into being selected to attend the competition, the opportunity to visit the Mars Desert Research Station and surrounding areas should not go wasted.

Much of your time will be spent at the competition and back at the hotel making alterations to your rover. If you can, take an extra day or two either before or after the competition to take in all of the sites.

Here are some tips to get the most out of your experience at URC 2018:

- Whether you come in from Grand Junction, Salt Lake City or Las Vegas, you get to experience the unique landscape of rock formations and deep valleys. If you have time, Google travel blogs about the area, which will guide you to the best look offs for photos. For instance, if you are taking extra time, the Grand Canyon is on the way from the Las Vegas Airport. It adds an extra 4-5 hours of driving time, but trust us, it's worth it!
- Get your teammates together and/or arrange to meet up with other teams throughout the week to enjoy some of the hiking and national parks that are in the area.
- One of the closest national parks to enjoy near Hanksville is Capitol Reef National Park. The park entrance is about 30 minutes from the town of Hanksville and is usually open 24 hours a day, every day during the competition.
- **Stargazing** - One of the most unknown facts about Hanksville, Utah is that it is one of the best areas for low-light pollution. Whether you are a photographer and want to snap some great time-lapses of stars or just want to check out the night sky at its best, there are plenty of areas outside of the town with zero light pollution that you can get to.
- **Hanksville-Burpee Dinosaur Quarry** - If you drive past the Mars Desert Research Station until the very end, there is a dinosaur quarry that gives free tours during the competition dates. For more information on this, please let one of us know.
- **Get In The Wild Adventures** - Explore more of the area before or after URC with a local outdoor tour and adventure company.

Arrive for the Meet & Greet event after registrations

- Protocase is hosting another meet and greet event. Last year was our inaugural year for this event, and because of you, it went over great! This year, the event will be held at the Hanksville Fire station (EMS Building) on Wednesday, May 30th from 5pm to 8pm. There will be a BBQ and a Rover Rodeo.
- This year, a number of Protocase customers will be attending the competition weekend, including the meet and greet event. We are excited to be hosting representatives from:
 - Honeybee Robotics
 - Microsoft
- Our guests are here to chat with the students to talk about employment opportunities, discuss best practices on resumes, and most of all check out the quality of the rover builds. Be sure to stop by and make them feel welcome.

Stay for the Awards & BBQ

- Once the competition is complete on June 2nd, the URC staff provides a BBQ for all competitors, judges and volunteers. Technically, all teams are required to attend the BBQ, as this is when URC staff present the competition awards.
- Beyond that, however, the BBQ is an awesome event – it will give all teams a chance to relax, have fun and show off their rover.
- Aside from the meet and greet event, this is also the best opportunity to chat with other teams and guests.

