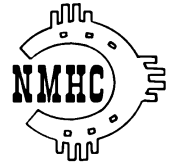


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DECEMBER 2015 – JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

"I rode up to the big spring half a mile downhill from the main house. Blackie walked out into the mud to water. I just reared back in the saddle enjoying the plentiful water and the gramma and buffalo grass growing across my pastures lush as a Bel Air carpet. Blackie pulled his muzzle up from the cool water and turned to move on. When he raised the first hind foot out of the muck, the suction caused it to make a popping noise. That was the excuse he'd been waiting for. I'm still here to tell you that horse could buck. I lost one stirrup, then two, and all I could see was his black mane flying. He'd sure swallowed his head.

Blackie was hitting the ground hard and kicking backwards before he turned in midair. It felt like my spine had been replaced by peanut butter. I tried to fall off but he bucked right under me for about three more jumps – each one felt like he ripped me in half, right up between my legs and out the top of my head, which was the appurtenance I failed to drive into the ground when I finally bucked off. At last the world slowed its spinning and I was able to sit up and look for my hat. It took awhile, but I finally discovered it was mashed flat on top of my numb scalp." For The Love Of A Horse, Max Evans, University of New Mexico Press, 2007.

Calendar

Jan. 19 – Feb. 18, New Mexico Legislative session.

Jan. 29, Friday: Deadline, nominations for five members of the NMHC Board.

Feb. 1, Monday: Board of Directors meeting, conference call.

March 1, Tuesday: deadline for mail in ballots, election of NMHC directors.

March 7, Monday: Board of Directors meeting, conference call. Future NMHC Board meeting calendar TBD.

April 1, Friday: Deadline for applications for NMHC Foundation 2016 scholarship (see nmhc website for information)

June 12-15: American Horse Council Annual Meeting and National Issues Forum, (including semi-annual Coalition of State Horse Councils meeting), Washington, D.C.

September 8-18: New Mexico State Fair, 2016.

October 1, Saturday: Deadline for nominations, 2016 NMHC Horse Person of the Year.

October 28-29-30: Coalition of State Horse Councils meeting, Kansas Horse Council (www.kansashorsecouncil.com) hosts.

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NMHC Annual Meeting



(NMHC Lifetime Achievement Award: from left, Bon Bagley, Slim Randles, Max Evans, Ron Morris)



For the third year, the Annual Meeting was graciously hosted by Dr. Steve and Penny Komadina at their home in Corrales on December 19. The evening began with the presentation of the NMHC Lifetime Achievement Award (a buckle) to Max Evans. At 91, Max and his wife Pat (not 91) no longer care for late nights. "Ol' Max" has lived a full life as a horseman, cowboy and more, beginning by driving family cattle at the age of four on his first horse, Cricket. His life of cowboying, horse training and trading, and writing is chronicled by his biographer, Slim Randles, in Ol' Max Evans: The First Thousand Years. Evans was nominated for the award by NMHC director Bon Bagley, introduced by Slim Randles, and received the buckle from NMHC President Ron Morris. In remarks, he spoke of his writings but got a groan when he said the book he is just now completing "doesn't have a horse in it". No fear: read one of the many others, rent one of the movies, look at the artwork. The Horse Council is honored to present this award to Max Evans, "the real deal".

Members and guests were introduced to Danette McGuire, NMHC's new part time staff person. Although new to NMHC, she is the executive director of the AYHC (American Youth Horse Council) and presented some ideas that worked for them and might work for NMHC.

Certificates of Appreciation were given. The first group helped to make a success of the first (but, it is to be hoped, not the last) legislative bus tour of the NM horse industry (organized by Jason Turner and Steve Komadina).

Dr. Leonard Blach, Buena Suerte Equine

Mrs. Terry Bogle, Reins for Life

Tom Goncharoff, Crystal Springs Farm

Dacodah Herkenhoff, Acacia Riding Adventures

Mrs. Susan Hunter, Hunter Creek Farms

Shaun Hubbard, Ruidoso Downs Race Track

Guy McElvain, Rancho Corazon, HIPICO Santa Fe

Fig Padilla, Purina Animal Nutrition

Jim Porcher, Arabian Horse Association of NM

Those in the second group are ending one or more terms as an NMHC Director:

Dr. Jason Turner (Equine Summits)



Dr. Steve Komadina (Lobbying)

Rusty Cook (Website)

Kristen Darnell-Kreger (Project Gelding)

Ralph Abeyta (Treasurer)

Erlene Seybold-Smythe (Facebook)

Bylaws revision. A committee has been working to revise the NMHC Bylaws, last ratified in 2007, for two years. One goal was to select directors to reflect horse owners throughout the state, not just the Albuquerque area. The proposed revised Bylaws were mailed to members a month in advance of the Annual Meeting, and those unable to attend were invited to submit proxies. After a short discussion, the question was called and the vote taken. The motion to revise the Bylaws passed by majority vote. Since the new Bylaws were deemed to take effect immediately, and called for a total of nine directors (and at least nine active directors remained on the Board of Directors), the scheduled election of five Board members was not held.

However, under both the current and proposed Bylaws, passage of amendments and revisions require a 3/4 majority vote. Therefore, it was subsequently ruled that the revised Bylaws did not pass and an election of Board members is needed. NMHC is holding an election with a mail-in ballot to be sent to our members of record (individual or lifetime individual, one vote per member; Club – 2 delegates vote per club; Commercial – 1 vote per commercial contact) as of the date of the Annual Meeting. Those joining prior to that date for 2016 "including the rest of 2015" will also receive ballots. Be sure you mail them back!

The deadline for nominations for five three year terms on the Board (expiring end of 2018) was January 29, and eight were received: (in alphabetical order) **Ralph Abeyta** (Albuquerque), **Robin Alden** (Tucumcari), **Shelley Bachicha** (Santa Fe), **Terry Bogle** (Dexter), **Juliana Cojo** (Ramah), **Dan Key** (Corrales), **Colleen Novotny** (Estancia), and **Mariah Wilson** (Albuquerque). Members will receive mailed ballots shortly; the secretary emphasizes that she must receive them from members by **MARCH 1**, so *don't* let them get lost in your stacks.





Happy New Year!

What to do on New Year's morning? (Alert for 2017.) Watch the Rose Parade! But watch it on HGTV, which runs it without commercials so you can see all the Equestrian units. The National Park Service entry, consisting of horses, pack mules and wagons, was one of several honoring this year's Centennial of the NPS. Another was the Scripps Miramar Saddlebreds. "Marshal" Michele Macfarlane (many will remember the loads of Saddlebred horses she brought to the NM State Fair Horse Shows) drove a pair to an authentic Yellowstone Park transport wagon. The New Buffalo Soldiers, formed after the Civil War, went on to become the first Park Rangers. Spectators enjoyed a total of nineteen units, (many were very large groups) from minis to mustangs, Andalusians, western color breeds, draft, rodeo drill teams, trick ropers – all perfectly behaved as well.

Continuing the entertainment theme, I posed my annual question to friend Dave Hennen of Anheuser-Busch Clydesdale operations: what about the big boys in the Super Bowl? His reply: "After the big push about our first foal of the year last week, the commercial you will see this year won't be the same as in the past. There is no story board to it, just a cool beer commercial with some hitch spots in it." (I knew Dave and his wife Gloria, who breed Andalusians, from the IALHA National show, where I ran the gate for several years. One year, Dave did a demonstration of a **random** hitch, something I have never seen before or since. It was three young gray mares, hitched with one between the shafts, a second in front for a tandem, and the third in front of the second for a random. The entire show staff gathered in the paddock, hoping he could pull it off – since he drove one of the Clydesdale six ups, we thought he had a good chance. He did say, as he trotted in, "Val, when I nod, OPEN THE GATE." All went well, and after the final figure 8 he nodded and drove out just as the young mares began to think they had had enough.)

New Mexico Legislature

Even numbered years feature "short" or thirty day legislative sessions (odd numbered years are

sixty days) so we are almost halfway through the 2016 session, should it end as scheduled on February 18. Although senators, representatives and the governor's office are arguing about some thorny issues, Legislative/Lobbying Committee Chair Steve Komadina says "all is quiet on the equine front". However, worried about a land study or bill, many NMHC recreational riders joined a "protect our public lands" rally Jan. 21 at the Capitol. They are aware that ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council, has circulated "boilerplate" legislation nationwide attempting to transfer federal lands to the states. Last year, a NM bill was introduced to set up a feasibility committee to study a public lands sale, but was defeated. This year, there is Senate Memorial 11, William Soules, "Recognizing and Honoring the Public Lands Legacy in New Mexico."

This will be a politics- heavy year, not only throughout the country but also in New Mexico. All seats in the NM House and the Senate will be up for re-election in November. The House (majority Republican) and the Senate (majority Democratic) will be attempting to change those numbers. The majority party, after all, gets to choose the leadership, the committee chairs, and which legislation gets to see the light of day.

But remember: New Mexico almost did not become a state. *"The attitude of Taoseños had been largely responsible in 1847 for a joint proposal by Secretary of State Daniel Webster and Secretary of War C.M. Conrad that the United States withdraw from the Territory of New Mexico and 'allow it to revert to its native inhabitants.' The Webster-Conrad discouragement seems to have been due in large part to the fact that the townspeople of Taos, in a cooperative venture with the adjoining Taos Indian Pueblo, had scalped Territorial Governor Charles Bent."* – Tony Hillerman

EHV-1 Virus Outbreak

Updates at New Mexico Livestock Board

www.nmlbonline.com

On January 8, a five-year-old mare became ill at Sunland Park and was euthanized. A necropsy sample was positive for Equine Herpesvirus and





confirmed with further testing at Texas A&M. Racing now has been cancelled for at least 21 days, although the track casino is still open with restaurant, bar, and simulcast racing. The economic impact, however, is projected to reach \$2.75 million in direct impact on owners and trainers, even if the ban is not extended. The Riley Allison Derby, a prep race for the Sunland Park Derby, was cancelled; the Sunland Park Derby is scheduled March 20. It is considered an important “prep race” for the Kentucky Derby, since six runners (including Mine That Bird) have gone on to start in the Kentucky Derby.

As of January 30 the NM Livestock Board says, “to date, 28 horses have been diagnosed as positive for EHV-1 on nasal swab and/or whole blood. These horses are from 17 different barns within Sunland Park racetrack; of the 28, 4 have been euthanized for progressive neurologic signs. No movement of horses is allowed in or out of Sunland Park

FAQs from the AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners):

- Equine herpes virus is a family of viruses of which nine strains have been identified. EHV-1, 3 and 4 pose the most risk for domestic horses.
- EHV-1 causes abortion, respiratory disease and neurologic disease; inflammation of blood vessels, blood clots, and death of neurologic tissue.
- EHV-1 is contagious and can be spread among horses through direct contact, including by handlers, buckets, grooming gear, tack, and trailers. Biosecurity measures, including disinfecting surfaces or items the horses may have had direct contact with, controlling foot traffic at the track, having plastic footwear covers for personnel who must work in the area, and sanitizing footwear and clothing, is a necessity. (Said Dan Fick of the New Mexico Racing Commission, “it is mandatory that, since fever is an indicator of EHV-1 infection, every horse on the grounds must have its temperature taken twice a day, logged, and reported to both Sunland Park and the NM Racing Commission.”)



- EHV-1 virus is estimated to be viable for up to seven days under normal circumstances but can live up to one month under perfect environmental conditions. The air around a horse that is shedding the virus can be contaminated, although it is difficult to know the distance the virus can spread through the air.

At **Sunland Park**, three of the horses euthanized were trained by one man. Brent Swopes, after euthanizing three of his eight horses last week including his favorite, said “this is a very contagious disease, a lot more contagious than most people originally thought it was. It was my decision to put these horses down; even if they recover they can become carriers and spread it to different tracks six months to a year later.”

Arizona Department of Agriculture officials announced on January 29 that, after one horse showed symptoms of the highly contagious virus, all horses at **Turf Paradise** race track, near Phoenix, have been placed under a 21-day quarantine. Racing will continue as scheduled but no horses will be allowed in or out of the facility. Of three horses that shipped from Sunland Park before its quarantine was put in place, one has been euthanized and the other two are being monitored.

Oaklawn Park in Arkansas has banned shippers from both New Mexico and Arizona. Its live meet is under way. Racing operations in Oklahoma, including Remington Park, Will Rogers Downs, Fair Meadows Tulsa, The Thoroughbred Racing Association of Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma Quarter Horse Racing Association are moving to ban horses from “any county with a facility or racetrack that is under quarantine for EHV-1 or from an adjacent county” although their live racing will not start until mid-March.

Trails and Land Use

Sabinoso Wilderness. Recently, the purchase of Rimrock Rose Ranch properties by the Wilderness Land Trust (made possible by a \$3.1 million contribution from the Wyss Foundation – created by a Swiss billionaire in 1998 to support locally led efforts to conserve public land in the American West) could eventually (perhaps even





by this summer) allow public access to the 16,000 acre Sabinoso Wilderness, which is now completely surrounded by private land whose owners will not permit public access through their property. (Oscar Simpson, chairman of the New Mexico chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, has said the problem of “lost access” has gotten progressively worse, particularly on the eastern edge of the Gila National Forest.)

There are criteria governing the acceptance of the donation by the BLM. But Senator Tom Udall, who wrote the bill that created the Sabinoso Wilderness, along with Senator Martin Heinrich, (guiding the HUNT Act through Congress to provide more access to public lands), and Representative Ben Ray Lujan, a supporter of the Sabinoso, praised the partnership.

Rio Grande Trails Commission. Enabling legislation signed by governor Martinez established the Commission, led by the NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. Although NMHC lobbied for an equestrian to be appointed to the Commission, four cabinet secretaries and the state parks director were joined by representatives of the Southern NM Trails Coalition, Talking Talons, Trout Unlimited, a backpacker, and the former state forester.

However, the Commission meetings are open, and NMHC director Bon Bagley has attended all of them. These public meetings are designed to solicit public and stakeholder input. Although participation will be voluntary, commissioners hope that “the recreation path or trail will run the length of the state from Colorado to Texas”. The initial segments of the trail will total about twenty miles and be established within the boundaries of six state parks – Elephant Butte Lake, Caballo Lake, Leasburg Dam, Mesilla Valley Bosque, Percha Dam and Rio Grande Nature Center. Bagley will lobby for equestrian use on any multi-purpose trail.

North Valley Insane Asylum Torn Down. The Sandia Ranch, consisting of seventeen acres in Albuquerque’s North Valley, has been purchased by Bernalillo County, which will soon hold public meetings on the use of the property. Preliminary sketches show an arena, since the Bernalillo



County 4-H Arena on Menaul may be eliminated. The asylum buildings, thought by many neighbors to be haunted, have been torn down. Clearing all debris (which will take six months) should clear out the persistent Sanatorium ghosts as well.

North Albuquerque Acres Zoning Update. NMHC member Barb Clark reports that zoning officials listened to the neighborhood and are implementing what the neighborhood wants (community agriculture amenities) and not what the high end residents want. Next step will be presenting the changes to the zoning board “some time in the future”. (Note: a survey was included with many 2016 dues forms, and one teaser from President Ron Morris indicated that a top concern of horse owners was zoning changes. And NMHC director Pam Bishop of Taos, an appraiser, is concerned about changes in how horses are valued for tax purposes because “the state is scrambling for any revenues it can get.”

A Blizzard Named Goliath

The Weather Channel reports that Winter Storm Goliath, the seventh named storm of the 2015-2016 season, is officially the deadliest storm system of the year in the United States. “Winter Storm Goliath lasted for days, affected a large geographic area during a major holiday, and brought some exceptionally intense weather phenomena,” said senior meteorologist Nick Wiltgen. The National Weather Service said gusts reached 82 mph near Clovis, with a wind chill of minus five to minus twenty-five degrees. New Mexico may have lost up to 5% of its dairy cows.

According to NM Cattle Growers Association executive director Caren Cowan, range cattle seem to have fared better than expected. Dairy cattle were another matter. Power went out, ten foot drifts blocked roads, buildings were damaged beyond repair. However, “the animal agricultural community pulled together in a most admirable fashion pulling together to do whatever was needed to make sure animals and humans got the best care possible after the storm. Dairy workers cared for animals 24/7 while neighbors came to make sure the humans had food, beds and clean clothes.” The extent of the disaster is still being assessed. Cows that





could be reached to be milked had the millions of gallons “poured down the drain for four days” because the highways were closed. Other cows could not be reached for milking and will probably not recover their health. The only bright note was that most calves, with access to igloo shelters, were insulated by snow drifts and were just very thirsty and hungry.

The USDA Farm Service Agency does have a livestock indemnity program that will pay part of the lost value of the stock, and they have just extended the deadline to file for losses. NMHC has not received any reports of horses lost in the storm.

Expo New Mexico

“Dirt dies.” Depending on its composition and use, arena footing is not kind to competitors forever. That in the Horse Arena was recently diagnosed as “dead, needing replacement” and the new footing was installed at the end of last year. First users (USTRC [United States Team Roping Championship] Super Looper) designated it as “too fluffy” but the riders and horses at the next event, an Arabian horse show, loved it.

NMHC members are beginning to make plans for the outreach booth in front of the Horse Arena at the State Fair. And perhaps horse demos in a larger pen. One exciting plan announced by Expo is the visit of the horse event **Cavallo** during the entire run of the Fair. They will be performing in a large tent built over footing installed near Tingley Coliseum and the Creative Arts Building. Perhaps the Horse Shows at the north end can coordinate to attract spectators to both venues.

Stolen Saddles

The internet and Facebook pages were buzzing recently with reports of saddles stolen from many locations, some in the South Valley. The “ring” arrested last year after more than 200 stolen saddles in the North Valley and Corrales has recently gone to trial, so it is probably not the same people. The usual problem of (1) varied jurisdictions not communicating with each other and (2) ranking thefts, even of valuable, perfectly broken in saddles as “used stuff” meant the networks of horse owners were the only ones



trading information. Some owners visited pawn shops, found their saddles, and purchased them; had they reported them to the police, the saddles would have been seized and held for a time until the thieves were caught and a case made.

One NMHC member said that, following the loss of her horse trailer and all its “horse equipment” contents in 2010, she found **Saddle Network** (www.saddlenetwork.com) and became a representative. She can help you with monthly or lifetime memberships, which will allow you to register and archive photos of your saddles with them, and receive numbered tags to attach to your saddles. In the event of a loss, they send out notifications on all social media. There will be more on this in the next NMHC newsletter. Meanwhile, I have noticed that our aging dog (who ran off burglars during the 2013 rash of thefts – we only needed to replace a ruined lock) is getting a bit deaf, so we have added an alarm and motion detectors that turn on security lights at our barn.

Skijoring in Red River

“Skijoring” is derived from the Norwegian word “skikjøring”, which means “ski driving”. On our family’s old farm near Rochester, NY, I remember my grandmother telling us how much fun it was when her brother mounted one of their plow horses, stirred it up to a trot, and pulled them along the road by a rope tied to the horse’s harness and held by the skier. The sport holds events in Colorado, but this is the first known time in New Mexico – and it’s considerably faster than a trot! “Anyone with a horse and someone dumb enough to ski behind it can be a competitor – you know you are in for a ride!” said one participant. The events were held the weekend of January 17 and 18, and also included a parade, fireworks and, of course, parties. Safety restrictions are stringent, the racers wear protective gear, and “I’ve never seen a horse hurt, said Tim McCarthy of Aztec, competing in the Open Division. The McCarthys (Tim is a former bull rider) will be taking five horses (including an ex-race horse), since horses are not allowed to compete more than twice a day. The organizers planned for fifty competitors over a





course consisting of an 800 foot straight run, with the skiers flying over three jumps while being towed.

Suzanne Norton Jones 1924-2015

Suzanne Jones of Tatum, NM, horsewoman, trainer, teacher, author – and wife, mother and grandmother – died on December 5, 2015, after a short illness. She is survived by her husband of 62 years, Punch, and her daughter Debbie of Tatum, sons Clabe, of Joseph, Utah, and Dirk, of Roswell and many grandchildren. Her daughter Michelle predeceased her.

She started riding at five and won her first race at ten. After graduating from Roswell high school, she attended college in Virginia and Arizona, receiving a degree in English while competing in both English and Western disciplines. She trained many horses, taking one fine Palomino from parade class competition to jumping at the international level. “Nautical” was on the Olympic Team and was the story behind the Disney movie “The Horse with the Flying Tail”. She married Punch in 1953 and their four children all competed in horse events, often with their own homebred quarter horses. The children’s involvement in 4-H led to immersion in the NM State 4-H Horse School, renamed the “Suzanne Norton Jones 4-H State Horse School” in 1992. She received honors from many associations, and was inducted into the AQHA Hall of Fame, the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame, the NM 4-H Hall of Fame, the Ruidoso Downs Racehorse Hall of Fame and the Lea County Hall of Fame. She was a valued member of the New Mexico Horse Council and won the NMHC Horse Person of the Year award in 2005. Nominator Elsie Shollenbarger said that Suzanne, in addition to raising her family, training her horses, authoring her books, magazine articles, and columns, and teaching her students, was “always and forever looking to set up the perfect match between horse and rider”.

In 2014, she and her homebred QH *Freckles On My Mind* were named Nutrena Senior Athletes at the AQHA Adequan Select World Championship Show. Senior *Freckles* was 12, senior *Suzanne* was 89. My favorite anecdote: a few years ago



she “had a bad wreck” when a three year old had a temper fit. I called several months later to see how she was doing, and she said “Well, Val, I’m riding again.” Knowing that this had been thought unlikely, I congratulated her and asked how it was going. She said “Oh, fine. Well, I had to. The doctors told me to stay off my feet.”

Memorable Changes at NMHC

I’ve been honored to attend Coalition of State Horse Councils (formerly the State Horse Councils Advisory Committee) for a number of years as the NMHC delegate (as long as no NMHC funds were used.) And by the way, these meetings are open to all registered attendees. The next is in Kansas City on Hallowe’en weekend, 2016, hosted by the Kansas Horse Council.) The same theme was reiterated at every meeting: in rankings of state horse councils – in terms of membership, program effectiveness, and success as a state organization – there was a giant gap between those councils run by volunteers, no matter how dedicated, and those with paid staff – at least a part time staff person. This was a necessary step in the growth of the most successful Councils.

New Mexico Horse Council has now hired its very first part time staff person, **Danette McGuire** of McDonald, NM, as **Executive Secretary**. I glanced at the proposed “scope of work” and hope there are really three of her at her house, but she seems terrifyingly efficient and we’re hoping for an exponential increase in membership to start. It appears to be beginning.

She has more than 18 years of experience in youth development, program management, fundraising and leadership education in the non-profit sector. She is currently also the Executive Director for the American Youth Horse Council (AYHC). The AYHC is an umbrella organization dedicated to providing leadership and educational resources that will serve and promote both youth and the equine industry. Previously, she served as the Director of Youth Programs for the National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA). While there, she facilitated significant growth in membership, scholarship, awards, and entries for the world’s largest youth cutting. And prior to that, McGuire worked for





the Cooperative Extension Service, first as a County 4-H Agent and later as the State 4-H Activities Specialist in New Mexico, where she coordinated statewide leadership development events as well as the annual state 4-H Conference. A native of New Mexico, McGuire completed a Master of Arts degree in Agricultural and Extension Education at New Mexico State University at Las Cruces. She can be reached via the NMHC telephone, (505) 345-8959, or at her email, danette@dmacalliance.com. She also is one of the receivers of email addressed to the NMHC info address, nmhc@swcp.com.

Notes from Danette McGuire:

We welcome your participation in all NMHC meetings, projects and committees. If you are interested in serving on any of the following standing committees, please contact Danette McGuire by email danette@dmacalliance.com or NMHC President, Ron Morris by email at lhrramorris@juno.com

- Public Policy & Legislative Affairs
- Industry Support and Fundraising
- Member Services & Programs
- Education & Information
- Equine Activities, Trails & Public Facilities

There's Lots to Like on Facebook

NMHC is on Facebook because social media is a great way to share information about NMHC projects and recruit new members to the organization. If you're on Facebook, be sure to like our page.

www.facebook.com/NMHorseCouncil



Remember to like, share or comment to keep NMHC in your newsfeed. Facebook has pesky rules to control what you see. The more you interact with our page the more you'll see of our posts. Plus, that helps us know what type of information you'd like us to share - fun, educational or calls to action.



New Look for Club & Commercial Members

We're making lots of updates to the NMHC website (thanks Rusty Cook) including a re-vamped page for [Club and Commercial members](#). The page now features a "business card" listing for each membership including their logo or picture, website and a short tag line. Stop by the website and take a look at all the new features!

For Sale: Stall Fronts



NMHC has four stall front panels for sale. They are located in Belen. Each panel is 10 ft wide x 8 ft high, \$300 each. Contact NMHC President Ron Morris, 505-417-6167 or lhrramorris@juno.com





American Horse Council Recap

The American Horse Council speaks and lobbies on legislative and regulatory issues at the federal level. NMHC is a state horse councils member of the AHC, and of its Coalition of State Horse Councils. They report that the 114th Congress, though starting with the partisan gridlock that has become the new normal in Washington, “ended the year with a burst of productivity by passing several major pieces of legislation, including a tax extender bill, an omnibus appropriations bill, and a five year highway bill. Each of these includes provisions favorable to the overall horse industry that have been priorities for the American Horse Council.” Some of these bills have been worked on for years and, said President Jay Hickey, “it’s not every day that we see several AHC priorities pass Congress in the span of a month.”

The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 benefits not only horse racing but everyone who is in the horse business. It reinstates three-year depreciation for all race horses for the next two years and increases the “Section 179” business expense deduction back to \$500,000 and makes this provision permanent. It restores bonus depreciation for qualifying new property, including assets such as horses and other equipment used in the horse business, purchased and placed in service during 2015 through 2019. And, the bill makes permanent favorable tax treatment for land donated for conservation purposes, particularly land donated by farmers, ranchers, horse owners and horse breeders.

Horse trainers, owners and others who cannot find American workers to hire for semi-skilled jobs at horse shows and race tracks often turn to the government H-2B program to find staff. The program, however, has gotten progressively more expensive and harder to use. The omnibus appropriations bill mentioned above rolls back parts of the program, making it easier for horse industry employers to find the workers they must have. These workers are badly needed to be directly responsible for the care of the horses upon which the entire industry is dependent.



The AHC has been working on fixing the shortcomings of the H-2B program for many years, through the regulatory process, standalone legislation, and the appropriations process with a coalition of other users.

The highway bill, known as the FAST act, Fixing America’s Surface Transportation, reauthorizes the RTP, Recreational Trails Program, for the next five years. NMHC members and other horse owners will remember lobbying hard for New Mexico’s inclusion in the funding when Governor Martinez first wanted to drop the state from the program several years ago.

And the Omnibus Appropriations Bill reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for three years with funding of \$450 million for FY 2016. This was extremely unlikely. The program, which had actually expired, provides funds and grants to governments at all levels for acquisition of land and water for recreation and protection of natural resources.

AHC also strongly supports the PAST Act, Prevent All Soring Tactics (S.1121/H.R. 3268) to end the soring of Tennessee Walking Horses. It currently has 232 co-sponsors in the House and 48 in the Senate. Additionally, the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (S.1110, H.R. 845) would help improve trails on National Forest Land. It is called the “most bi-partisan bill in Congress”. ***Note: The NMHC Board, at its meeting on Feb. 1, voted to send a letter in support of this bill.***

Last but not most certainly not least, the Board of Trustees has announced that AHC President Jay Hickey will retire June 30 of this year. He has been President of AHC since 1993, succeeding Rich Rolapp. Under his direction, new committees were formed to represent different segments of the industry, national economic studies were completed, and the Congressional Horse Caucus, the Congressional Cavalry, the Unwanted Horse Coalition, and the AHC Marketing Alliance “Time to Ride” were formed.

A search committee has been formed at <http://www.indeed.com/president-be177ebd7b8212e9>.



Two Land Use Narratives

The Buffalo Tract. A 3,100 acre parcel, northeast of Albuquerque, was appropriated by the US Government in 1862 under the Homestead Act. Now held by the Bureau of Land Management, a revised management plan is being considered to return the land to its historic stakeholders, perhaps as early as this year. And those with claims to the land are: **the San Felipe Pueblo**, which has partnered with the horse advocacy group **Placitas Wild**, with plans to turn the area into a horse sanctuary; **Santa Ana Pueblo** (which says “we have an aboriginal claim”), and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding **with the San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant**; and communities in **Placitas** and **Sandoval County**. An existing leaseholder, who has been unable to use his lease to graze his cattle for ten years, says the land “really needs to rest for at least five years before making a comeback” from the damage caused by up to several hundred free roaming horses. So: equine sanctuary? Reintroduce big game animals? Living museum? Mining? A congressional action would be required for any of these groups to acquire rights to the land.

Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, Ukraine. On April 26, 1986, an accident at the V.I. Lenin Nuclear Power Station caused devastation and radiation release over a large area in one of the world’s worst nuclear accidents. The 120,000 residents within a twenty mile radius were evacuated, and a “zone of exclusion” was established covering 1,600 square miles. Thirty years later, the Journal Current Biology reports the following: large species including wild boar, roe deer, elk, and European Bison are thriving. European lynx, never present, now live in the area; European brown bear, not seen in the area for a century, have been found. The wolf population is several times higher than in comparable non-contaminated reserves, to the point where hunters and police set up operations to hunt wolves leaving the exclusion zone to raid nearby farms. Professor Jim Smith of Portsmouth University, one author, said “we’re not saying

radiation is good for animals, but human habitation and exploitation is worse.”

The Przewalski’s Horse population relocated to the area has not fared so well. Established as an alternate location to the herds in Mongolia, it is not growing as expected for feral horse herds. Either wolf predation is higher than expected or (supported by carcass and photo trap evidence) poachers are entering the area and meat hunting.

NYC Carriage “Deal” Derailed

Mayor Bill de Blasio, whose campaign promise to ban horse-drawn carriages in Central Park “on his first day in office” was sidetracked by intense opposition, announced two weeks ago that he had reached a deal. The number of horses would be reduced from 180 to 110; they could work a maximum of nine hours a day; and they would have a new stable constructed in Central Park, with a view to eliminating the need to travel on city streets. “We are pleased to reach an agreement in principle”, said the mayor in a joint statement with the City Council Speaker and the teamster’s union.

Whoa. A week later, administration officials presented the plan to the City Council, with the oft-repeated refrain “I don’t know” in response to questions on details. “You are asking us to buy an empty bag here with a hole in it”, said one Councilman. Although insisting that having the horses “negatively impacted public safety and the quality of life in the City”, the mayor’s office had no statistics, no studies, and few plans. “Don’t all of you talk at once”, said another Councilor when more questions were met with silence. The City has large estimated costs (\$25 million for the proposed stable) a recommended location but not a confirmed one, and could not say whether parkland would be sacrificed. Several Council members mentioned that the administration lacked horse sense – particularly since they had had two years to prepare for the meeting. “There’s nothing but a blank check here, and statement that something could happen, sometime, somewhere” one said.

With just one claim of animal abuse in 160 years, the carriage horses might as well settle back in.

