

Kansas Western Horseman's Association Sets Kickoff Of 75th Anniversary Show Year

By Frank J. Buchman

“It’s kickoff time for the 75th anniversary year of the Kansas Western Horseman’s Association (KWAH).”

That’s the announcement from Renee Nichols, KWAH secretary and longtime participant-leader.

“The KWAH spring kickoff is scheduled Saturday, February 18, at the Fossil Creek Hotel in Russell,” Nichols said.

KWAH was formed in 1948 to bring saddle clubs together across the state of Kansas for competition and friendship.

“The emphasis is on ‘friendship’ because this is such a great family sport” Nichols said. “Families have continued supporting and competing in KWAH with four generations being involved.”

Because of the interaction of the competitors and their families, lifelong friendships and relationships have been sealed and cherished.

Kickoff schedule starts with a directors meeting at 10 o’clock, then judges testing at 12:30, judges meeting at 1:00. The secretaries’ meeting is at 2 o’clock, with the general meeting beginning at 3:30.

Fun activities from 12:30 to 3:30 feature indoor roping, relay tic-tac-toe, corn hole, and swimming. A souper bowl and social time starts at 5 o’clock.

KWAH has events for all ages and skill levels. Breakdown of age groups is one-nine, 10-13, 14-17, women 18-49, senior women 50 and over, men 18-49, and senior men 50 and over.

“There are no ‘horse breed’ requirements, only that Western saddles and tack are used.” Nichols said.

Local saddle clubs have shows all over the state. “KWAH has an annual state show, usually over Labor Day weekend,” Nichols said. “Contestants qualify from riding in the local shows to compete at the finals.”

It’s not a mandatory requirement to compete at the state show, but it’s kind of an end-of-the-season championship, she commented.

“Local clubs and KWAH also sponsor trail rides and other get-togethers so there truly is something for everyone,” Nichols said.

Several of the original events that were set up in the first KWAH rule book are still being run today.

There are judged events including horsemanship, Western pleasure, bareback horsemanship, and reining. “We have lead-line and walk-trot for the younger competitors and queen class for the girls and women,” Nichols said.

All race events are run with a distance of 165-feet from the starting line to the turning line. Adjustments can be made to the length to accommodate smaller arenas or for arena conditions for safety.

Events may be individually timed or can be run in a heated format with heat winners determining final placings. For safety “No contestant should run in or out of the gate in any events at a KWHA show,” Nichols pointed out.

“KWHA prides itself in being a family-orientated organization. Any rider of any age or skill level can ride and enjoy themselves,” Nichols said. “We are always eager to welcome new members to the organization. So, if you have any questions at all please do not hesitate to reach out to a current board member.”

Additional KWHA officers include Kelly Forell, Victoria, president; Shawn Kohr, Sedgwick, vice president; and Norleen Knoll, Hays, treasurer.

“Bring your friends, family, and have some fun. Make some memories to last a lifetime,” Nichols encouraged.

More information is available at www.kwhaonline.com or kwhasecretary@gmail.com 785-735-8747.