

## Last rider from centennial re-ride to be grand marshal

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Wednesday, 15 September 2010 21:41 -

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Bob Plank hasn't swung his leg over a horse in two years.

Until about a year ago, he's always had at least a couple of steeds around the family farm north of town where he lives with wife Marge.

"Horses have always been a big part of my life," Bob said.

Re-enacting the journey of the Pony Express on the back of a horse through the Gothenburg area has also been an important piece.

The 84-year-old carried commemorative mail in the first official reride over the length of the original route in July of 1960.

After the first reride, none happened over the entirety of the Pony Express trail until the National Pony Express Association (NPEA) was organized by a group of dedicated California trail enthusiasts in 1977.

Bob participated in subsequent rerides in the Gothenburg area until declining health forced him to quit in 2000.

"It was also time for younger riders to take over," he said.

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**FAST  
PONY EXPRESS  
FACTS**

- 500 horses made the first ride
- 180 relay stations were positioned along the way from St. Joseph, MO, to Sacramento, CA
- 45 miles was what each rider rode although horses were exchanged about every 10 miles
- \$50 a month was what riders earned plus room and board

(Source: Bob Plank, retired Pony Express rider)

1861, the Pony Express was the first overland mail service in the United States. It was a relay of horsemen carrying mail across the country from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. The service was the fastest way to get mail across the country at the time. It was also the first time that mail was carried across the country by horsemen. The service was the fastest way to get mail across the country at the time. It was also the first time that mail was carried across the country by horsemen.