

Last rider from centennial re-ride to be grand marshal

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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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 re-ride over the length of the original route in July of 1960.

After the first re-ride, 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 re-rides 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 Plink, retired Pony Express rider)

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