



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

American Endurance Ride Conference

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Photos available by request

Discover a new sport for you and your horse

The time spent with your horse is precious. For those who compete in equestrian sports, those few minutes in the ring may not satisfy your craving to spend more hours in the saddle. If you've been longing to hit the trails and really ride, it's time to discover endurance riding.

With introductory, fun rides of 10-15 miles, and then the competitive distances of 25-35 miles (limited distance) or 50-100 miles (endurance distance), there is no doubt this sport will bring you and your horse closer in partnership.

The nonprofit American Endurance Ride Conference, now in its 43rd year, welcomes riders of all ages and equines of all breeds. Most people with a reasonably conditioned horse or mule will be able to complete a 25-mile ride within the allowed six-hour time frame. "And they'll have a fun time, discovering great trails and meeting other endurance riders and their horses," said AERC Executive Director Kathleen Henkel.

AERC rules require that a prize be given to each finisher — it can be anything from a photo taken during the ride to a T-shirt or certificate or handcrafted item. Often there are prizes for winners in varying weight divisions and for the horse deemed best condition in each competition of 25 or more miles.

Sound intriguing? AERC has reissued their 16-page Discover Endurance Riding booklet, which is available free upon request at 866-271-2372 or [www.aerc.org/AERC\\_InfoRequest](http://www.aerc.org/AERC_InfoRequest).

Just a few of the AERC rides across the U.S. and Canada this summer include:

**Shamrock Pioneer** – run on the historic trails of southeastern Wyoming, where Native Americans, pioneers and outlaws once roamed the West. This picturesque and challenging ride has a 30-mile and 55-mile option each day, July 1-3.

**Bandit Springs** – Held in the Ochoco National Forest in Oregon on July 9 and 10, this ride offers distances ranging from 25-75 miles.

**Vermont 100** – One of only a few rides where equestrians share the trails with ultrarunners, this long-time ride is held in West Windsor on July 16. Besides the 100-mile ride, there are 50- and 75-mile options.

Pine Tree – This Maine ride has five days of riding, with distances of 25-55 miles, August 9-13. Trails run along and across the Saco River, near Fryeburg.

And, of course, the ride that started it all and remains THE ride that draws more people to the sport of endurance riding than any other: The Tevis Cup (real name: Western States Trail Ride 100). Begun on a dare in 1955, the riders and horses traverse the Sierra from Squaw Valley to Auburn in a true test of horsemanship and stamina.

Taking the first step towards entering the Tevis—or a 25 mile LD ride—is the easy part. AERC has extensive educational materials (including its own YouTube channel) and a mentoring program that can match up new riders to experienced veterans of the sport.

And the rider’s partner? While Arabians and part-Arabians are numerous, the sport is seeing a rise in the number of gaited horses, Paso Finos, and other breeds. All equine breeds are welcome, and it’s typical to see Mustangs, Appaloosas, Quarter Horses and even Icelandic ponies at AERC rides.

All competitions are run by a ride manager and overseen by veterinarians, known as control judges, who check over the equine athletes before, during and after the ride to be sure each one is “fit to continue” as they make their way along the course.

Hundreds of endurance rides are held annually around the U.S. and Canada, with everything from small, low-key rides to ultra-competitive races. The nation’s top riders are gearing up for the national championship ride to be held September 8 and 10 in Utah’s Antelope Island State Park.

The organization’s national office tracks miles and points for all members and their horses, and confers annual awards in both regional and national competitions, including a family award and an award given to the rider 65 or older who completes the most miles each year.

AERC’s monthly publication, Endurance News, includes an extensive ride calendar and awards standings each month as well as education articles and features.

New members can join AERC at [www.aerc.org/NewMbrReg](http://www.aerc.org/NewMbrReg) or by phoning the AERC office, located in “the endurance capital of the world”—Auburn, California—at 866-271-2371.

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