

AERC BOD Conference Call Minutes Mon. July 14, 2014

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Campbell at 8:01pm Central Time.

Those on the call were Michael Campbell, Lisa Schneider, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Monica Chapman, Connie Caudill, Sue Keith, Peter Himmertzheim, Rusty Toth, Nick Kohut, Steph Teeter, John Parke, Duane Barnett, Susan Kasemeyer, Julia Lynn-Elias, Andrew Gerhard, Forrest Tancer, Tom Bache, Olin Balch, Susan Garlinghouse, Terry Woolley Howe, Mike Maul, Bruce Weary, Randy Eiland, Kathleen Henkel, and Jennifer Waitte.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to accept the agenda. Mollie Krumlaw-Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith made a motion to accept the AERC BOD Conference Call Minutes for June 9, 2014. Terry Woolley Howe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to excuse Roger Taylor from the meeting due to no cell phone coverage at his ride site. Nick Kohut seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Skip Kemerer and Paul Latiolais were not on the call.

Kathleen Henkel provided the BOD with the Membership Report.

Membership Report for July 11, 2014

Membership as of 7/8/13 4909

Membership as of 7/11/14 4692

Rider Fees as of 7/11/13 \$45,989

Rider Fees as of 7/11/14 \$37,985

Sanction Fees as of 7/11/13 \$15,506

Sanction Fees as of 7/11/14 \$17,003

Sanction Fees as of 7/11/13 for the 2014 season: \$1205

Sanction Fees as of 7/11/14 for the 2015 season: \$1290

New Members as of 7/8/13 523

New Members as of 7/11/14 511

The Sanctioning Committee bought forth a request for the second year of the Llano Estacado Pioneer Ride in Central Region. The ride will be 30/55 miles on June 5, 2015. On June 6 & 7, 2015 an intro/30/50 mile ride. Ride Manager is Doug Blashill and Lorie Van Ongevalle assistant manager. Dr. Gail Conway and Dr. Andrea Ceur will be the control judges. The request passed.

Membership Committee Report on the Recently Proposed Trail Division Motion

Introduction

The Membership Committee recently developed and circulated a draft Motion proposing the creation of a new Trail Division (TD’). The objectives motivating this concept were:

A. Membership: Increase AERC membership by offering rides that are attractive to a broader range of trail riders.

B. Exposure: Expose Endurance Riding to more trail riders with the expectation that greater familiarity would entice some of new TD riders to become endurance riders.

C. RM Support: Provide Ride Managers with a new source of revenue.

The proposed TD is essentially a formalization and expansion of the “Introductory Rides” now recognized under AERC rules. The new elements that would formalize these rides as an AERC Division are:

- a. Rides would be sanctioned.
- b. Length could be up to 35 miles (Introductory Rides are limited to 22.4 miles). As for Introductory Rides, LD rules apply when length exceeds 15 miles.
- c. No placings, but miles would be recorded and tracked in the AERC database.
- d. Awards would be given.

Membership Committee Report

The MC solicited comments from the Ride Managers and Education Committees, as well as the BOD. Many good comments were received. In reviewing these comments, the MC came to the following conclusions:

- There are many reservations about the wisdom of creating a TD at this time. The most important are:
 - o We may need to change the Bylaws. This can be done, but it requires a big effort that must be justified by a very important need.
 - o Accumulating miles for non-competitive trail rides will meet strong resistance from some members of our community. This is a cost that must be balanced by greater benefits.
- There are easier and less disruptive ways that may achieve the MC objectives.

Membership Committee Recommendations

- I. The MC will not submit the TD Motion at this time.
- II. The MC believes that widely-used and effectively-marketed Introductory Rides can achieve the objectives for Membership, Exposure, and RM Revenue. The MC notes that RM's must follow the AERC Introductory Ride rules to ensure coverage by AERC insurance. The MC also notes that these rules need clarification.
- III. The MC recommends that the forthcoming "Marketing Plan" include a focused effort to use Introductory Rides as an important Membership Recruiting tool.
- IV. The MC recommends a tracking effort to understand how well the Introductory Rides are achieving our objectives.
- V. The MC will provide human and other resources to support implementation of this and other Membership-recruiting elements of the Marketing Plan.
- VI. The MC requests that this report be included in the minutes of the meeting at which it is presented.

In old business the BOD voted on the 'Transparency Motion' (see attached). Motion failed with a vote of 11 against and 10 for the motion.

The BOD voted on the 'Exploratory Committee for Formalizing Relationship with the Ride & Tie Association' motion (see attached). The motion passed 19 votes for and 2 against. Those against were Connie Caudill and Mollie Krumlaw-Smith. They stated they voted no because they don't think AERC and Ride & Tie are a good match. Other BOD members were interested to see what the committee would come up with.

The continuation of the Horse Welfare Motion will continue at the Midyear BOD Meeting.

Lisa Schneider and AERC member Jennifer Waitte explained an AERC Marketing and Media Strategic Plan submitted by the AERC Membership Committee. The Marketing Plan will be reviewed and discussed in more depth at the BOD Midyear Meeting. A brief overview is below.

AERC Marketing and Media Strategic Plan

Executive Summery

The AERC Marketing and Media Strategic Plan (MMSP) proposes a plan to build brand equity and awareness of AERC. The MMSP addresses three key related areas:

- I. Objectives – What we want to accomplish
- II. Strategies – The actions we will take to accomplish objectives
- III. Measurement of Results – To determine if our strategies achieved our objectives

Introduction – What is Marketing, Really?

In order to appreciate the MMSP, it is important to understand the meaning of "building brand

equity.” Marketing is not advertising. Advertising will not increase membership. An advertisement – even with a call to action – will have minimal impact on membership. Furthermore, the cost of an advertisement cannot be justified by the number of new memberships it attracts, nor is this an accurate way to measure results.

Brand Equity describes the value of having a well-known brand name, in this case AERC. Some marketing researchers have concluded that “brand” is one of the most valuable assets a company has, as brand equity is one of the factors that can increase the financial value of brand to the brand owner. Elements that can be included in the valuation of brand equity include (but not limited to): changing market share (increased membership), profit margins (a healthy association that can reinvest in its programs and members), consumer recognition of logos and other visual elements, brand language associations made by consumers and consumer’s perceptions of quality. Brand equity is created through strategic investments in communication channels and market education. It appreciates through economic growth, prestige value (respect), and critical associations. Brand Equity can be measured both quantitatively (increased membership) and qualitatively (recognition, prestige, respect) and associations of interest.

Building brand equity takes time. It builds by delivering a dynamic and consistent message through multiple channels. Advertising has its place in the MMSP toolbox, but its objective is very specific. The MMSP is not an advertising plan; it is a broad-spectrum marketing strategy to increase membership in AERC by increasing public awareness of the sport and developing key relationships.

Everything presented in this MMSP has already been done at one point, is currently being implemented by AERC to some degree, or has at least been discussed. There are no new ideas here. What AERC lacks are the personnel and financial resources to commit to executing a marketing plan in a consistent manner over a long period of time, which is imperative to its success.

I. Objectives

II. Strategies

1. Co-Host Events.
2. Enhance Partnerships with Breed Associations
3. Participate in Trade Shows/Equine Expos.
4. Converting Fun Riders into Endurance Riders.
5. Enhance the Mentor Program.
6. Promote AERC!
 - A. Generate editorial content for print and electronic media
 - B. Develop Social Media Strategies
 - C. Develop an active online forum (see Chronicle of the Horse Forums)
 - D. Develop a Marketing Plan Specifically Targeting Youth.
7. Develop an AERC Marketing Team.
 - A. Develop Internship Program
 - B. Hire Freelance/Contract Marketing Expert

III. Results

Results of any marketing plan are not instantaneous. Building brand awareness is a process. The effort must be consistent. By the end of the first year, AERC should begin to see results.

Measurable results will increase during the second year, with the third year realizing the most significant results. Results are measured in the following ways:

Increase in new members

Decrease in current members not renewing

Increase in editorial exposure (print media)

Increase in impressions (online)

Peter Hommertzheim reported the Big Horn ride went well this year.

Andrew Gerhard reported that Tevis entries are up for this year.

Julia Lynn-Elias reported she joined the June BOD Conference Call late and wanted to correct the minutes that she was on the call.

Connie Caudill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Susan Kasemeyer seconded the motion. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:18pm Central Time.

Submitted by Monica Chapman.

AERC Board of Directors MOTION PROPOSAL

Motion Name Availability of Horse and Rider Data to the Public to Enhance Transparency and Openness

Proposing Committee Membership Committee

Date of Motion July 2014 BOD CC MEETING

Classification of Motion Request NEW

Proposed Motion Resolved, that the AERC Board of Directors Motion stating that "Rider records and horse record information will be for members only," dated 8/18/2012 is hereby rescinded.

Background, analysis and benefit The AERC Board of Directors (BOD) approved closing access to non AERC members in 2012. The BOD initiated this action to provide a "perk" for members that non-members would not have, thus encouraging membership renewal. However, since passage of that decision, events in the international endurance arena have caused this BOD to pass a motion requesting greater transparency by the international organization. Accordingly, it is this BOD's determination to lead by example and make all of our members' horse and rider

ride records information available to the public. Many of our members' horse and rider records demonstrate our belief in the welfare of the horse as documented by the thousands of miles the rider and equine partner have completed together. Further, making the information publicly available will help convey our motto "To finish is to win" in the mind of those considering entering into endurance.

Budget effect/impact Loss of funds already spend to close the database, amount unknown at this time. AERC office has not yet been invoiced for the work.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization The positive impact with our AERC Membership, by the BOD taking a concrete action that supports transparency, may help increase membership growth. This action may also help attract more Sponsors because we will have concrete action that demonstrates we value transparency of the records of your riders and horses.

Impact on AERC Office There should be no negative impact on AERC as we are merely requesting the existing database to be changed back to the way it was.

Committees consulted and/or affected Membership Committee, five votes for open database of rider and horse ride records, one vote against. **Technical Committee, we requested the funds spent to date on closing the database, the information has not yet been sent.**

Implementation plan Horse and rider records remain as is, no change required.

Supporting materials None

Supporting approvals Membership Committee, five vote for open database, one vote against.

AERC Board of Directors
MOTION PROPOSAL

Motion Name Exploratory Committee for Formalizing Relationship with the Ride & Tie Association

Proposing Committee Membership Committee

Date of Motion July 14, 2014

Classification of Motion Request Appointment of Committee

Proposed Motion

Whereas, closer relationship between the Ride & Tie Association ("R&T") and AERC

offers many potential advantages for members of both organizations, and

The most important potential advantages for AERC are in new opportunities for membership recruitment, and

There are many issues to be addressed and understood before undertaking such a merger, and, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Membership Committee is hereby directed to form an “Exploratory Committee” to (1) identify options for a formal AERC-R&T relationship, (2) analyze advantages and disadvantages of mutually-attractive alternatives, (3) make recommendations for further action, and

Resolved, That the Membership Committee will make an initial report of its findings, including recommendations for further action, at the AERC BOD mid-year meeting in August, and

Resolved, That the Membership Committee is authorized to seek information, consultation, and advice from other AERC Committees and subject-matter experts as it develops its findings.

Background, analysis and benefit: Membership recruiting and retention are very high priority issues for AERC. There are many individual, local, and regional initiatives to increase membership by improving outreach to our current demographic. This initiative introduces a different strategy – expanding our outreach to a different demographic by formalizing a relationship with R&T, a related, but now independent, competitive trail riding organization.

A wide range of options are available for formalizing an R&T – AERC relationship. At one extreme is a complete merger under which R&T would become another AERC Division. At the other extreme R&T would remain entirely independent, but gain more opportunities to share resources when R&T and AERC events are conducted at the same venues. There are countless other options that may arise during discussions with R&T.

R&T events are very similar to AERC rides. Most are now held concurrently with AERC events. The R&T Rules are similar to AERC Rules. Apart from relatively minor details, the main difference is that AERC endurance rides have one rider/horse, and R&T endurance rides have two riders/horse (one at a time). A large fraction (50% perhaps?) of R&T members are also AERC members, including some very prominent members of the AERC community (e.g., Dennis Summers, Dr. Greg Fellers), so the membership of the two organizations has much overlap now.

The benefits to R&T of a closer relationship with AERC are obvious and appreciated by current R&T management. They might include access to increased resources and economies of scale for publicity, recruiting, trail access, insurance, horse welfare measures, education, vendor attention, etc.

The benefits to AERC are mostly in membership recruiting. A full merger would immediately add new members (initial estimate is a few-hundred), and the opportunity to expand our membership by recruiting new members who are attracted to R&T more than to Endurance Riding. A second, and potentially much more important, benefit could be gained by a merger or other relationships short of that. This derives from the perception that R&T is needed to provide a practical entry point for interested endurance athletes that aren't yet ready to commit to becoming a dedicated equestrian. To exploit this benefit we would need to help R&T to grow by encouraging teams pairing an experienced rider (with appropriate horse, trailer, expertise, and willingness to mentor a novice) with a good runner willing to learn enough horsemanship to cover the gaps between his/her runs. Exposure to endurance rides and riders (e.g., shared award ceremonies and subscriptions to EN) is likely to motivate many of them to take on the challenge of riding 50 or 100 miles.

Budget effect/impact. Insignificant for this exploratory effort that includes development of estimates for the financial impact of options for closer relationships.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization One objective is to analyze this in some detail

Impact on AERC Office Same as above

Committees consulted and/or affected: As needed (see Motion)

Implementation plan None – this is an exploratory effort.

Supporting materials None,

Supporting approvals None