

Western Wisconsin Horse Show Association Celebrates Another Successful Season at Annual Awards Banquet

LA CROSSE, WI – The Western Wisconsin Horse Show Association (WWHSA) celebrated the achievements of riders across four disciplines at its annual awards banquet on November 1st, 2025 recognizing excellence in horsemanship and community involvement from the 2025 show season. The banquet had 196 people in attendance.

The evening brought together members, families, and supporters to honor competitors who accumulated points throughout the season in Dressage, Hunter, Gymkhana, and Pleasure disciplines. From May through September, WWHSA hosted approximately eight shows per discipline across Western Wisconsin, with speed events offering even more opportunities for riders to compete. Multiple clubs throughout the region partnered to make the robust show schedule possible.

"This banquet is the culmination of months of dedication by our riders, volunteers, and host clubs," said Haley Simms (V-P Hunter/Dressage). "It's wonderful to see our community come together to celebrate these accomplishments" Jessica Nyhus-Ahnen stated (V-P Pleasure).

Season-Long Competition and Register of Merit Awards

Throughout the season, riders earned points in individual classes, with those points accumulating toward year-end awards in each discipline. Additionally, horse and rider combinations earned points over multiple years toward the prestigious Register of Merit recognition, acknowledging sustained excellence and partnership in their respective disciplines.

Commitment to Accessible, Welcoming Competition

WWHSA, formed in 1994 is one of the "longest organized open horse show organizations in the mid-west" according to Pat Stevenson, (WHC carded judge and previous WHC Horseman of the year recipient and one of the founders of WWHSA). The organization prides itself on maintaining the open show philosophy, creating an environment where riders of all experience levels—from those just starting out to high-level competitors—feel welcome and supported. The organization believes in keeping horse shows local and affordable for families, ensuring that the sport remains accessible to all.

"We want our shows to be a place where someone can get their feet wet and learn the ropes without feeling overwhelmed," explained Gretchen Heilman (V-P Speed) "Whether you're bringing your first horse to their first show or you're a seasoned competitor, you'll find the same welcoming atmosphere and supportive community."

This commitment to fostering a positive learning environment has made WWHSA shows ideal for newcomers to gain confidence while still providing the competitive challenge that experienced riders seek. The organization's members take pride in creating an atmosphere where questions are encouraged, nerves are understood, and every achievement is celebrated.

An Evening of Recognition and Community

The banquet featured a meal shared among members and their families, followed by the presentation of awards across all four disciplines. The evening also included a live auction, with proceeds supporting the organization's continued operations and charitable initiatives.

A highlight for many young riders was the Youth Bonus Bucks Auction, where participants could bid on donated items using "bonus bucks" earned throughout the year through volunteer work and show participation. This unique program encourages youth involvement in all aspects of the organization beyond just competition.

Commitment to Community and Education

WWHSA is governed by a board of directors that includes vice presidents representing each of the four disciplines, along with traditional board roles, ensuring that all facets of the organization have a voice in its direction.

In recent years, the organization has been able to give back to the broader community through donations to several non-profit organizations. WWHSA has also demonstrated its commitment to supporting young equestrians' futures by offering generous scholarships to graduating high school seniors who have been active members of the association.

Looking Ahead

As the 2025 season comes to a close, WWHSA looks forward to another exciting year of competition beginning in May 2026. The organization continues to welcome riders of all ages and skill levels across its four disciplines.

For more information about WWHSA, upcoming show schedules, or membership opportunities, please contact any board members that are listed on the website at: www.wwhsa.org.

About WWHSA: The Western Wisconsin Horse Show Association is a multi-discipline equestrian organization offering competitive opportunities in Dressage, Hunter, Gymkhana, and Pleasure disciplines throughout Western Wisconsin. Dedicated to the open show philosophy, WWHSA creates welcoming, affordable, and educational environments for riders of all levels—from beginners taking their first steps into the show ring to experienced competitors. The organization is committed to promoting horsemanship, sportsmanship, and community involvement while keeping local horse shows accessible to families throughout the region.

Western Wisconsin Horse Show Association Annual Awards Banquet 2025 Photos

