

## 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 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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