

Athens Review, Athens, Texas  
September 3, 2010  
Bound for World Equestrian Games  
Athens woman to utilize passion for Tennessee Walking Horses  
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The Athens Review

ATHENS — Val Delana of Athens will soon be packing her bags, and hitting the trail to the World Equestrian Games, also known as WEG, as horse hipsters call it.

Delana has been a member of the Board of Directors for the National Walking Horse Association since 2005, one of two members from Texas. She is a former breeder and trainer.

“The Tennessee Walking horse has been my passion for about 25 years,” said Delana. “I now own three of these magnificent animals, and enjoy trail riding, limited showing and competing in the American Competitive Trail Horse Association events.

Only the Olympic Games and Soccer's World Cup can capture the attention of the world in the same way as the Federation Equestre Internationale, World Equestrian Games.

This year, the U.S. has the honor of hosting the biggest international equestrian event ever on U.S. soil: The 2010 Alltech\* FEI World Equestrian Games.

The event is scheduled for Sept. 25 through Oct. 11, at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington.

Competitors from more than 60 nations will vie for individual and team world championships in eight FEI-sanctioned competitions.

Fittingly, Lexington, Ky. was chosen to host this event. The official name for Lexington is the "Horse Capital of the World."

This 16-day event anticipates 600,000 reserved ticket sales, and an economic impact of \$150 million dollars. NBC and USN will televise the competition. Be sure to check your local and cable listings.

There will be a total of eight FEI-approved competitions, including Eventing, Jumping, Dressage, Para-Equestrian Dressage, Driving, Endurance, Vaulting and Reining.

Reining is the only Western riding discipline sanctioned by the FEI. Sometimes called “cowboy dressage,” it is the ultimate test of a Western rider's horsemanship skills.

Another interesting Texas connection is that the United States Reining Team consist of that one member of the team, either horse or rider, and in some cases, both the horse and rider, hail from Texas.

The Equine Village venue is unique to the 2010 World Equestrian Games. It will be the central site that houses both exhibits from various equine exhibits.

Demonstrations will showcase the depth and scope of the equine industry to spectators. The Equine Village gives the entire equestrian world outside the eight disciplines a chance to be involved in the World Equestrian Games.

This is where you will find Val Delana, representing the National Walking Horse Association (NWhA).



In the Fall of 2008, the Board of the NWA received an application to apply to become a breed representative in the Equine Village. Other Tennessee Walking Horse organizations also applied.

In the end, it was the NWA that received the sole invitation to represent the breed. Since then, Val Delana, and a number of other members, have been hard-at-work to prepare for this exciting opportunity.

The initial goal was to raise a minimum of \$9,000 through sponsors and fund raising events, as the exhibit space is very pricey.

To date they have managed to raise \$14,000. This has allowed the organization to put together tote bags with breed-specific information to further promote the NWA..

The dental company where Delana is employed, and the sister company in California, have stepped forward to help with the funding for the bags. Vettec has also agreed to contribute, and their logo will be printed on the tote bags.

The American Competitive Trail Association of Dripping Springs has also committed to a sponsorship.

Delana said that the past month has been spent sorting through hundred of photos, and placing them into a format for a video.

The next step will be to set them all to music, and publish it onto a DVD that will be used by the volunteers working at the display in the Equine Village.

Delana also took on the task of scheduling the volunteers.

The 10 horse and rider Demonstration Teams from NWA have been selected from a multitude of teams that auditioned, to be included in the entertainment line-up. They welcome the opportunity to awe the audience with their skills and the naturally-inherited gait of the breed.

The National Walking Horse Association is a non-profit organization focused on the protection and promotion of the Tennessee Walking Horse against abusive practices that once were rampant among trainers and exhibitors of the breed.

The NWA serves as the USDA-approved Horse Industry Organization, and as such, offers an equitable inspection process for shows and sales of the Tennessee Walking Horse.

NWA is charged with upholding federal regulations as set for in the Horse Protection Act.

According to Delana, the NWA, as a non-profit organization, is often short on resources, but are seldom short of volunteers to step in and help out with their time and generous spirit.

Anyone desiring information as to how to volunteer or provide resources for the World Equestrian Games or other activities, please contact Delana at 903-675-2953 or

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