



**North American Trail Ride Conference
Region 6 Membership Update
February 2026**

1. **Region 6 Officer Elections** – The Region 6 Board of Directors met on January 26th and elected officers for 2026. Huge thank you to the following individuals who were elected to serve our region this year. President – John Zeliff (tentatively); Vice President – Valerie Partch; Secretary/Treasurer - Ruth Mesimer; and Recording Secretary – Kristen Schmalzried.
2. **Technology Updates Are Happening** – For years we have all heard the same moans and groans coming from users of our current RMS system when signing up for a ride, etc. That is about to change! Thanks to the leadership of Region 6 member Alex Braun, NATRC is now beginning much-needed technology updates.

Phase 1 is a website rebuild and that project is complete. The original launch date was scheduled for December 21st, however, we ended up delaying that launch due to the holiday schedules. Look forward to an announcement soon on a new launch date.

Phase 2 is currently underway. We are partnering with a development team and beginning to build a brand-new Ride Management System (RMS) that will make it easier than ever to sign up for rides, manage entries, and view results, all in one seamless platform.

Phase 3 is the digital scorecard.

We have had several Region 6 members already donate towards these updates. Any size donation will be appreciated and very helpful. Our membership recently voted to donate \$2,000 from Region 6 towards this project!

As we build the future of NATRC, we invite you to join us on this journey through your donations which can be made on our website at n atrc.org/donate. Be sure to note that your donation is for the Technology Fund. Your donations are tax deductible.

Together, we are paving the way for the future – modern, connected, and ready for what is next. Thank you for your support and partnership in making it happen!

3. **Take a Road Trip** – Join us in Austin, Texas for the 2026 national NATRC convention February 20-22. Heritage, Harmony, and Hill Country will be theme for this exciting event. If you have not attended one of our national conventions, you really need to get that added to your bucket list. You will come away inspired as well as motivated for the upcoming ride season.

Each registered person attending convention will receive a ticket in their swag bag at check in. A \$500 drawing will take place on Friday and another \$500 on Saturday. (Limit

one win per person) The \$500 will count as a credit to the winner's ride fees for the 2026 ride year.

This year's educational seminars focus on developing balanced riding skills for healthier and stronger horse and rider partnerships. You will learn from experienced NATRC horsemanship and veterinary judges who will share insights to elevate your competitive trail riding experience.

Meeting and getting to know other NATRC members from across the country is extremely rewarding. [Click here to view this year's convention schedule.](#)

4. **EquiFest of Kansas 2026** – Region 6 once again had a booth at the EquiFest of Kansas Horse Expo. This year's event was moved back to Topeka and was held the weekend of January 23-25. The winter weather created a few changes in plans for some of our booth volunteers as well as the overall attendance for this outstanding event. It seemed that Friday's attendance was a lot larger than in past years while Saturday's attendance was a little less. Huge thank you to Cheryl Bohling and Ruth Schindler for their help in setting our booth up Thursday afternoon and for working the booth on Friday along with Catherine Crites. Thank you also to Helen Smith for driving down on Sunday to help work the booth and especially for her help in taking the booth down that afternoon after the show.

Next year's EquiFest is currently planned to take place in Topeka the corresponding weekend of January 22-24, 2027.

5. **2026 Rider Vest Numbers** – If you are interest in reserving a specific number/letter for 2026, contact Trish Cleveland at trishcleveland166@gmail.com. The cost is just \$15 per number or letter. Secure your favorite number/letter now for the upcoming ride season!
6. **Last Chance For 2025 Raffle Tickets** – There are a few (very few) raffle tickets remaining for the 2025 NATRC Raffle! The drawing will be held at the 2026 national convention in Austin, Texas. You do not need to be present to win. Region 6 is guaranteed a winner. Contact either myself or Marla Stucky to get entered. Tickets are \$5 each or five for \$20.

First prize is a Clingman 16" Gaited Western Endurance Saddle donated by our new national NATRC sponsor Tennessee Saddlery. The second prize is a 1-year premium US Rider Membership. For third prize, one winner from each of our six regions will receive a \$100 fuel card.

7. **It Is Time to Renew Your NATRC Membership** - [Click here](#) to renew your NATRC membership for the 2026 ride season. Renew your NATRC membership by February 19th for a chance to win a competing membership of your choice (Excludes platinum upgrade)
8. **Platinum Membership Upgrade Reminder** - The ONLY way to get the platinum upgrade is through the Equisure link on the website. You can no longer purchase it with your membership nor send a check for it with the paper form. It is a member benefit, but we do not handle payment for it like we used to.
9. **Free NATRC Memberships** – In 2026, we will once again be offering a FREE membership to first time NATRC members! Tell your friends and bring them to a ride with you!

10. **Ride for Free in 2026** – The Nebraska Endurance Competitive Trail Ride Association (NECTRA) will pay the entry fee for a Junior's first ride or will pay one-half of the entry fee for an Adult's first ride. This discounted first ever ride offer is good for any of our ride divisions but is only valid for any Region 6 rides in 2026. Tell your friends and neighbors and then bring them to a ride with you this summer! Thank you NECTRA for your continued support to NATRC and Region 6.

11. **2026 NATRC Virtual Mileage Challenge** – It is time to start logging those miles! Join us for the 2026 NATRC Virtual Mileage Challenge. Sign up is underway now! Participation requires membership with both NATRC and Top Trail.

First, join Top Trail at the Top Trail Regular Membership level (\$35/year). Then, join the NATRC group membership separately for \$25/year.

All GPS recorded ride tracks, ridden and posted to your Top Trail account from January 1 through December 31 will be included on the challenge leaderboards. Rides must be posted to Top Trail within 10 days of the ride's conclusion.

The top ten riders nationally along with the top three riders from each NATRC region will be recognized at the 2027 national convention.

Join the fun, log those miles, and get your horse ready for the 2026 NATRC ride season!

12. **Own a Piece of NATRC History** - Would you like to call a piece of rich NATRC history your own? The first of the series of retired traveling trophies is now available for silent auction bidding until Saturday, February 21, 2026, at noon when all bids will close. The first trophy for auction is the Polly Bridges Memorial trophy with an opening bid of \$500. Bids can be placed by emailing Sarah, NATRC Executive Director at natrc@natrc.org. **Please check with Sarah on what the current bid is at before emailing your bid.** All bids will remain anonymous during the bidding process with the winning bid announced at the NATRC National Convention in Austin, TX. Auction proceeds will be applied to our NATRC national awards program.

13. **Breed Awards** – Keep your breed association individual membership current for the horse(s) you are competing NATRC with. By doing so, you will be eligible for end of the year high point horse awards. Many of the breed associations provide some very nice awards. Your support also helps NATRC continue to build our relationships with them.

14. **Check Your RMS Profile** – This is a good time of the year for all of us to take a quick look at our profile in RMS and update our address, phone number, email address, and emergency contact information as needed. This really helps ride secretaries when they are making contact lists for rides.

15. **Updated 2026 Ride Schedule** – Attached is the most recent ride schedule for 2026 as of 1/14/26. Increasing the number of A rides (that offer all divisions) continues to be a priority. Our Region 6 Board of Directors is committed to the elimination of any barriers and/or concerns anyone may have regarding managing a ride. The support is there! Please consider managing or co-managing a ride in either 2026 or 2027.

Have an idea for a new ride location? Please contact [Holly Barrett](#), our Region 6 ride coordinator.

New this year is a LeD Championship Series for our three stand alone LeD rides. The horse and rider team that completes all three of these rides and has the highest total

combined points will receive a special award. More information will follow.

16. **Reminder: NATRC Branded Products** – NATRC Sponsor [Distance Depot](#) offers NATRC branded products for our members. They have a wide selection of jackets, sweatshirts, polo shirts, gear bags, hats, headbands, and other items for you to shop for. A percentage of your purchase benefits NATRC making this a win-win for everyone.
17. **Keep Current** – Stay up to date with Region 6 by following us on social media!
 - a. Follow us on Instagram @natrcr6! **There are currently 1,065 Region 6 pictures!**
 - b. Follow us on Facebook with our Region 6 NATRC Riders group and our Region 6 North American Trail Ride Conference page.
 - c. Subscribe to the NATRC (North American Trail Ride Conference) YouTube channel.
18. **Follow Region 6 on the Web** - Make our Region 6 webpage (natrcr6.org) your startup page for your internet browser. When you do, every time you open your browser, your opening tab will be our Region 6 webpage. It is an effortless way to stay current with Region 6!
19. **Important Region 6 dates and upcoming events:**
 - National NATRC Convention, Austin, TX February 20-22
 - Region 6 Awards Banquet, May 15, Hillsdale Lake, Paola, KS

I am looking forward to the upcoming ride season. Get your goals set, plan out your individual 2026 ride schedule, go grab some motivation by attending our national convention, and then start getting those conditioning rides in! The days are starting to get longer!

#cannotwait
#NATRCfun
#NATRCregion6

#chasindreams
#NATRCfamily
#NATRC

John Zeliff, R6 President

Follow me on Apple Music @j_zeliff
Follow me on Instagram @johnzeliff
And then be sure to follow me to the next Region 6 ride!