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## **Certified Horsemanship Association Debuts Trail Challenge, Sponsored by Markel, at the 2015 CHA International Conference Awards Banquet**

*(December 2015)* – Every year at the Certified Horsemanship Association’s International Conference, the association hosts a competition for CHA members to test their skills against each other. Last year’s competition was the Riding Instructor Challenge, where Shellie Carmoney of Iowa won the competition between riding instructors to teach a “new” rider. This year’s competition held at the 2015 CHA International Conference in Amarillo, TX, was the CHA Trail Challenge, which was sponsored by Markel Insurance. The winners of the inaugural event were Christine Henry of Fort Worth, TX, and Beth Powers, of Bellefontaine, OH.

The inaugural CHA Trail Challenge included a three-part challenge for teams of two. There were nine teams that competed in Knot Tying 101, Packing, and Fire Building. Knot tying involved getting the teams performing a highline picket with a butterfly knot and a bowline knot. For the packing part of the challenge, teams had to do a single diamond pack hitch correctly. And the fire building challenge involved building a camp fire correctly. The event was timed and the fastest team that completed each challenge correctly won.

Each event was judged. CHA would like to thank the following judges: Dr. Bob Coleman, a professor at the University of Kentucky, and CHA Instructor Brent Morgan judged knot tying. CHA Instructor Stan Loewen and Executive Director of the Back Country Horseman of America Jim McGarvey judged packing. And CHA Instructor Darla Ryder and Scott Carter judged fire building.

The event was the idea of past CHA board member Fred Bruce of Holbrook, AZ. Bruce is a CHA Master Instructor and a CHA Clinic Instructor for Standard, Combined, Seasonal, Trail, Driving, and the Equine Facility Managers Certification. He was awarded the 2009 CHA Distinguished Service Award. He has been involved with CHA since 1981 and has been instrumental in starting and improving many CHA certification programs. Bruce has also been a contributing author for many of CHA’s manuals.

Bruce said that the event came about after a discussion with CEO Christy Landwehr about the trail program having an increased presence at conference. He was assigned to organize

the event. “A few conference calls and a willing group of volunteers made it happen,” said Bruce. “Stan Loewen, Scott Carter, and myself brought the needed equipment.”

Bruce received several requests to repeat the CHA Trail Challenge at future conferences. “I felt that it went well and was fun for all involved,” said Bruce. “All participants were good sports in the competition. The conference attendees were the audience cheering on their favorite team.”

“I would like to thank Markel Insurance for being the event sponsor and West Texas A&M University and Amanda Love and her students and staff for being such great and helpful hosts,” continued Bruce. “Also Christy Landwehr and Stan Loewen, thank you for helping the Trail Program have a presence at the 2015 Conference. Thank you AQHA and Ward Stutz for the use of the awesome chuck wagon.”

For events that want to host either the CHA Trail Challenge or the CHA Riding Instructor Challenge, please visit <http://cha-ahse.org/store/pages/212/CHA-Horsemanship-Videos.html> for video previews of each event and then contact CHA to host one in 2016 at your expo.

For more information about the 2015 CHA International Conference, please visit [Facebook.com/CHAinstructors](https://www.facebook.com/CHAinstructors) and search hashtag #CHAiCON on Facebook. For more information on the 2016 CHA International Conference, visit [http://cha-ahse.org/store/pages/47/International\\_Conference.html](http://cha-ahse.org/store/pages/47/International_Conference.html).

*CHA Instructors Change Lives Through Safe Experiences with Horses. The purpose of CHA is to promote excellence in safety and education for the benefit of the horse industry. CHA certifies instructors and trail guides, accredits equestrian facilities, publishes educational manuals, produces educational horsemanship DVDs and YouTube Safety shorts, and hosts regional and international conferences. For more information on the largest certifying body of riding instructors and barn managers in North America, Certified Horsemanship Association, please visit [www.CHA-ahse.org](http://www.CHA-ahse.org) or call 859-259-3399. To find a certified horseback riding instructor or accredited equine facility near you, visit [www.CHAinstructors.com](http://www.CHAinstructors.com).*

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