

Tevis cancellation doesn't stop annual party

By Jenna Nielsen, Journal Staff Writer



Ben Furtado/Auburn Journal
Conrad Bowlin, 4, of Auburn pets and feeds Mirifyque, an Arabian horse up for raffle at the annual Tevis Cup barbecue held at the Gold Country Fairgrounds Wednesday. The celebration was still held in the wake of the ride's cancellation, which was announced last week.



This year's cancelled Tevis Cup didn't dampen the spirits of dozens of would-be riders, organizers and volunteers Wednesday night.

The 100-mile endurance ride's annual barbecue was held at the Gold Country Fairgrounds in the wake of the race's cancellation, which was announced last Wednesday after forest fires in the American River canyons threatened access to roads and the health and safety of riders and volunteers.

The ride was scheduled for July 19 but was canceled for the first time in history just weeks after the Western States 100-mile endurance run was called off due to poor air quality as a result of the fires.

"It's disappointing, of course, but it's the right choice," said longtime rider Kathie Perry, who was set to attempt the garnering of her 19th buckle from the race this year. "The best decision was made for the horses and the riders and the crews. It's just not worth jeopardizing health and safety."

Perry said she will just have to wait until 2009, and that she is ready.

"We live for tomorrow's ride," she said. "I think this means that next year the race is only going to be bigger and better."

The Tevis Cup ride begins at Robie Park in Truckee. Riders follow the Western States Trail 100 miles, finishing at the Gold Country Fairgrounds. There is a 24-hour cutoff for riders to finish.

The cancellation of the two signature events won't have an effect on Auburn's Endurance Capital of the World's status, said Mike Pickett,

Tevis Cup ride director.

"If anything I think we will have more excitement and more riders next year," Pickett said. "A lot of people work all year round and train all year long for this."

Pickett said many of those involved in the race have been supportive of the decision to cancel.

"They'll be back next year," he said. "Everyone has been really understanding."

Ride organizers were able to contact all 150 signed up participants within two hours of the cancellation announcement. A few unprocessed applications were still pending at the time of the announcement.

All entrants are being offered an opportunity to receive a full refund for the race or a chance to do-nate the fees for the incurred costs ride organizers still face.

Through the disappointment, it was nice to celebrate the hard work put in by hundreds of volunteers and organizers, Pickett said.

"It's been great to make a celebration out of it and let everyone relax and commiserate," he said.

Giovanni Graziani, a race supporter from Italy who travels to Auburn each year in order to bring back information about endurance to share with fellow Italians, said his decision to still attend the barbecue was an easy one.

"It's not only about the race," Graziani said. "It's also about all the hard work that goes on around the race. Organizers, riders, horses, people are fighting for this all year long."

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