

# Chronline.com

The Chronicle Newspaper • Centralia, Wa.

Monday, January 29, 2007

## Horse Industry Excited About REQ Center

REGIONAL EQUINE CENTER:  Domed Stadium Should Boost Business, Local Economy, Many Believe

**Aaron VanTuyl**  
Economic and energy reporter

Monday, January 29, 2007



The proposal of a 7,000-seat horse arena outside Winlock, predictably, has those in the local horse industry talking. The Southwest Washington Regional Equestrian (REQ) Center, with a price of between \$55 and \$80 million, is slated to open in June of 2009, its backers hope.

And, in horse circles, the talk is good.

"This could be a boon to the local horse industry," said Mark Bolender, a former banker and owner of Bolender Horse Park, located outside Mayfield Lake. "It'll have much larger ramifications than the horse center itself."

Nick George / The Chronicle

Lee Brock, Gig Harbor, background, looks on as Mark Bolender works with his horse at Bolender Horse Park in Silver Creek Saturday. Bolender, owner of the horse park, is a strong supporter of the plan for a large equestrian center at Winlock. "It will have a very positive impact on Lewis County," Bolender said.

BOLENDER, WHO LOST to F. Lee Grose in the Republican primary election for a seat on the Lewis County Commission in September, said the location would be perfect to attract large crowds from Vancouver, British Columbia, to California. In November, he attended a three-day horse show in Eugene, Ore., that brought in about 3,000 spectators. The animal owners participating stayed in trailers on site and, in their down time, explored the surrounding area.

"Even though I stayed on site, my food, groceries and fuel were all bought locally," he said. "It'll definitely have a positive impact for the community."

The large-scale arena could also bring more young faces into contact with horses, increasing involvement in 4-H programs, he predicted.

"It's absolutely great for the youth to come and have an outlet for their energies," said Bolender, who gives free weekly riding lessons to 4-H clubs at his park. "Whatever programs we can feed them to encourage them, that is awesome."

The REQ Center, he predicted, will be a needed boost to the local agriculture industry and, more specifically, the 30-odd local businesses dealing directly with equine training and upkeep.

"Agriculture is definitely suffering," he said, "so anything we can do is excellent."

RON DURYEYEA, owner of Premium Quality Hay and Feed, trucks several varieties of hay from Eastern Washington to sell in his Onalaska shop. The majority of his business, he said, comes from horse owners.

"To me, anything to do with horses in this area is a good thing," he said.

Duryea and his wife, Tina, have sold hay for the past five years and opened the feed store, in a brand new building, in April. Duryea stocks alfalfa, orchard grass and several different mixed hays, including a new product, "teff hay."

"It's a brand new thing. It's just like the ultimate horse feed," he said.

The REQ Center, he added, could only be good for business.

"Everything would sell more," he said. "If it has to do with horses, it's a good thing for me."

DR. LINDSEY POLLOCK, head of Rolling Hills Veterinary Clinic in Winlock, opened her medical center about a year ago. Though horse conditions, such as lacerations, floating teeth and lameness, make up only about 5 percent of her business, she said, the proposed horse arena is a good thing.

"I think it's an excellent idea," she said. "It'd be good for our area. We've got a fair amount of people involved in horses, and having a covered area to put on some serious events is a good thing."

The arena, which Pollock said would go great with her plan to expand the clinic's equine medical facilities, would mean more than just more horses in the area.

"Anything that'll bring good jobs to Lewis County - that's good," she said.

THE ARENA COULD also be a big push toward turning Western Washington into an equine destination.

"Florida built up a \$7 billion industry," Bolender said, citing the strategic proposed location for the 50- to 80-acre site. "We can do the same thing."

...

Aaron VanTuyl covers education, economic affairs and religion for The Chronicle. He may be reached at 807-8237 or by e-mail at [avantuyl@chronline.com](mailto:avantuyl@chronline.com). His blog, "VanTuyl's Views," is on line at [www.chronline.com](http://www.chronline.com).

## Related Links