

Extreme Cowboy - a show for the generations

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By: Jenna Dulewich



From Queen bees to newbies, the upcoming Extreme Cowboy Alberta show will host a range of talents.

"I think it is to promote that small town feel ... I think it is very important to have this here," said Candice Lee, former 2012 Centennial Stampede Queen and Cochranite.

"It is hard to connect in a big community, especially Calgary and places like that but this is the community I want to be a part of and I want to be a part of that small town feel."

The Extreme Cowboy Alberta chapter came to Cochrane approximately three years ago and has been growing fast ever since, now the biggest club in Western Canada with more than 200 members, according to organizers. Membership has experienced royalty such as Lee and up and coming riders, including 14-year-old Heather Burchnall, the Cochranite who placed in top 10 in for youth riders at the Extreme Cowboy Association World Finals last year in Texas.

"I joined the club when it first started. Everyone who started is still in it and it is a big family," Burchnall said.

"It is a competition like you have never seen before because you have a mix of obstacles and speed. It is so cool to watch the horsemanship and watch the control they are in. Since I started with extreme cowboy I haven't missed one of their races."

The Extreme Cowboy races originated in Texas and were brought to Canada through the Calgary Stampede by the founder Craig Cameron.

"Extreme cowboy wasn't here when I was younger, I just showed in pony club ... but it gives the girls huge leadership skills and it gives them something to do after school so they are not getting in trouble," Lee said.

The former stampede queen said this is a good organization to have in the community and after breaking-in two different horses through the sport, Burchnall agreed.

"When I first got my horses they would spook at everything but since I did my first race, they really learn to trust you," Burchnall explained.

"I was doing a (horse) clinic when I just fell in love with the (sport). The horsemanship you need for it is just amazing."

Obstacles in the course can include riding horses to jump over logs, open a gate to run a loop inside and shut the gate, or attempting to shoot a target while riding.

"It definitely has taught me a lot of leadership," Burchnall said.

"Personally I want to be a trainer when I grow up ... I know that as a rider I have improved so much and I wouldn't be at the level I am at today without extreme cowboy."

For those who have never been to an Extreme Cowboy event, Lee encourages people to attend.

"You don't have to be a cowgirl or cowboy, it is just fun to watch," she said.

"It's a mixed match community for riding. People ride different horses, have different saddles ... if their horse can do it, why not ride?"

The show hosts seven different competitive divisions;

Green – green horse and green rider

Youth – ages 12 to 17 years

Novice – ages 18 and older for “new to the sport riders”

Ride Smart – ages 55 and older

Intermediate – a rider who is ready to move out of the novice division but is not yet ready to compete in the non-pro division.

Non-Pro – a rider that has experience as a rider but does not receive any form of compensation for riding or training horses, ponies or mules.

Professional – Those over the age of 18 who earn a living in the horse industry.

The Extreme Cowboy Show is coming to Cochrane on April 15 and 16 starting at 9 a.m. at the Cochrane Agricultural Society grounds, located in the northwest corner of Highway 1A and Highway 22. Spectators are welcome.

Visit extremecowboyalberta.ca for more information