

Notice to all MSA and CSA members

It has come to our attention that statements have been made by those who wish to do us harm, that we are going broke and out of business. We ask that you ignore negative propaganda. Please contact us directly regarding any rumors. Do not allow those who wish to harm to our association to hide in the shadows of anonymity.

Over the past three years, we have been made aware of many attempts to smear us with false information and representations of us in a false light. The spreading of rumors has made it difficult to compete in a sport with such a small population. Responding to rumors is difficult, because it cannot be done without bringing further attention to the rumors. However, not responding can be just as dangerous, as it allows people to assume that what they are being told is true.

Before we met, both my wife Ann and I owned and operated successful small businesses, giving us the experience necessary to lead our sport. We are also third generation owners of one of the largest privately held corporations in the United States. I do not share this information because of ego, but to respond to those who have pretended to know our financial status, as they have attempted to create fear within our membership. While we are financially independent, our business experience has taught us to operate every business with sound principles.

Our decision to purchase the MSA, Western States Mounted Shooting, CSA and Western Shooting Horse was not made for financial benefit. In all cases, the previous owners approached us, because they were confident that we could continue the legacy that had been started by the founders. Our commitment has always been to establishing professional associations that placed member's needs and desires first. As mounted shooters ourselves, we have a unique ability to relate to what is important to mounted shooters and have always believed that a growing sport could support multiple associations, just as other successful equestrian disciplines have proven. We have encouraged our members to participate with any association and have welcomed fair competition that also supports the right to choose.

We believe that the rumors of us going out of business may have contributed to the lack of people signing up for our Central Championship, in a state that has three MSA clubs and a strong membership base. While it was very disappointing to announce the first cancelation in our history, the tornados and flash flooding that closed the roads leading to the facility would have been a danger to our members and we are thankful that no one was harmed by the severe weather. Making difficult business decisions will not always be popular, regardless of being prudent, however we understand the difference between investment and wasteful spending.

In order to provide professional events, we must financially commit to venues and staff well in advance and do significant planning, while trusting that our members will support our efforts with their attendance. There is a slippery slope created by those who will not commit to an event unless they know in advance that there are

large numbers attending. With everyone waiting for others to sign up first, the self-fulfilling prophecy that there will be a poor turnout is inevitable.

We are asking those members who may have been avoiding signing up for our Eastern Championships based on fear of cancelation or false rumors, to reconsider. This will be the first major event to bring the MSA and CSA together and is an opportunity for members of each association to meet new friends that share a passion for mounted shooting and discover the advantages each association offers. This event will not be canceled, barring acts of God. Sam and Lee Helms are hosting the event and have a long history of hosting fun and professional events.

In response to those who have made it their purpose to discourage our members with reckless rumors of our demise, we have decided to offer an additional incentive to those who will help us show the mounted shooting world that we are alive and well and that our community stands strong against outside influences.

Western Horse & Gun has already committed \$2,000 for both associations to split and Taylor's & Co. has sponsored a lever action rifle. To show our commitment to our members, we are doubling the added money from Western Horse & Gun to \$4,000. Each association will receive \$1,000 for the main match and \$1,000 for the sharp shooter jackpot. Taylor's & Co. will also sponsor an additional lever action rifle. Division winners from the rifle competition from each association will draw for one rifle.

If our members will help us send a message to the mounted shooting world of our strength and partnership, we will reward more added money based on attendance. If we have at least 50 entries between the two associations, we will award \$2,000 to each main match and \$1,500 to each sharp shooter jackpot, for a total of \$7,000. If we have at least 100 entries combined, we will add \$3,000 to each main match and \$2,000 to each sharp shooter jackpot, for a total of \$10,000.

As an additional show of support and faith in our members, we will also allow members to pay when they check in at this event. Simply enter as usual before the event and select this option under payment. We continue to ask that you respect our need to plan accommodations, by signing up before our deadlines, as late fees will still be applied after the deadline has past.

We hope we have reassured those who have been discouraged by dangerous rumors and have shown our commitment to our members remains firm. Please help us send a message of strength and partnership by asking your friends to join together to unify our two great associations by participating in the Eastern Championships.

Richard Pihl
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Publisher, Western Horse & Gun