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## Friends of Governor Dodge hold fundraiser

By Pat McKnight

Contributor

The dream of building a new camping area for trail riders at the Governor Dodge State Park is more than \$10,000 closer to reality following this year's fundraising event.

The Friends of Governor Dodge State Park-Equestrians hosted their fifth annual fundraiser Sunday, June 2, at the state park.

Ideal trail riding weather helped draw a record 124 paid participants who either rode their horses along a marked section of the park's equestrian trails or joined park naturalist Josh Kozelka in a guided hike. Participants in the poker ride drew cards for a poker hand, and cash prizes were awarded for the top three winning hands.

The winning poker hand was drawn by 7-year-old Ella Mellum of Spring Green who took home the top prize of \$100. This was Ella's third year riding at the event with her mother, Tara Mellum, and grandmother, Katee Christianson. Ella rode her grandfather's mule, Glenda.

The second-place hand was drawn by Rose Rott, and the third-place hand was held by Rogers Parr.



Submitted photo

Seven-year-old Ella Mellum of Spring Green rode her grandfather's mule, Glenda, on the trail ride fundraiser held by the Friends of Governor Dodge State Park-Equestrians. Mellum held the winning poker hand in the June 2 fundraiser.

Connie Prouty and Lacey Campbell Rebarchek were the winning park supporters who saved

change for the Dimes for Dodge campaign and entered in a drawing for prizes.

"Every little bit counts," said Sandy Rogers, a co-chair of the FOGD Equestrian Committee.

Following the ride and hike, participants enjoyed a lunch, live music and the opportunity to bid on more than 100 silent auction items donated by local and national companies and individual park supporters.

"Thanks to generous sponsors, auction donors and attendees, this year's event was the most successful ever, netting more than the group's \$10,000 fundraising goal," Rogers said.

Proceeds from the poker ride and hike will go toward the modern 21-site equestrian campground at the park. This project has been in the planning stages for a number of years and has an estimated construction budget of approximately \$550,000.

The FOGD-Equestrian Committee fundraising efforts, launched at last year's June poker ride, now stand at just over \$200,000. Phase I of the project was completed this spring when the Friends funded construction of a trailhead "comfort station." The vault toilet can now be used by trail riders, hikers and rock climbers, as well as eventually serving the new campground.

More information about the campground project and how to help with the project, can be found at [www.GovDodgeFriends.com](http://www.GovDodgeFriends.com).