

Pony Express riders rumbling into Nevada

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Hoofing it through Nevada starts today as Pony Express riders leave their overnight rest stop of Woodfords this morning en route to Genoa, Carson City and destinations farther east along Highway 50.

“I think the unique part about the Pony Express was the endurance where you had man and beast trying to beat the elements,” said Les Bennington, president of the National Pony Express Association.



Les Bennington
and Rich
Tatman with
the National
Pony Express
Association in
Stateline on
June 8.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

He and others from the association spoke to a couple dozen people gathered in front of the famous Pony Express statue at Harrah's Tahoe on Tuesday morning about this being the 150th anniversary of the famous mail delivery system.

Indian troubles along the way were normal. One rider died while on horseback. Others were ambushed at the stations.

Although the Pony Express was only in existence from April 1860 to November 1861, the lore of days gone by lingers on.

“Everyone enjoys history of the West. Everyone grew up wanting to be a cowboy,” said Rich Tatman, California division president.

Bill Cody’s “Wild West” shows helped spread the romantic notion of the bygone era. Better known as Buffalo Bill, he often had a Pony Express rider being chased by an Indian in his shows that were performed all over the States as well as in Europe.

The volunteer association was formed in 1978, with this being 31st year the ride has been re-created. Normally it goes 24 hours – just like the real one did. And usually it takes 10 days from Sacramento to St. Joseph, Mo.

Because of the significance of the anniversary, the route started in San Francisco on Sunday, which is where the western terminus was, and riders are stopping.

More than 500 people will have ridden part of the route by the time the last horse arrives in St. Joe on June 26. Each only goes for a handful of miles before someone new is in the saddle. Some people ride more than one leg.

Most years the riders come through the South Shore to the enjoyment of crowds that often top 50 people.

[Click here](#) for more information about the anniversary ride.