



GRAND VALLEY DRESSAGE SOCIETY MEMBERS WIN TOP HONORS FROM ROCKY MOUNTAIN DRESSAGE SOCIETY

Western Colorado Dressage Riders Win 14 Championships From 2023

Grand Junction, CO – **Grand Valley Dressage Society** (GVDS) members from Mesa, Delta, Eagle Garfield and Routt Counties were awarded 14 championships plus other significant awards at the Rocky Mountain Dressage Society’s (RMDS) annual awards banquet on January 13. These accolades were in addition to the multiple championships earned at the RMDS Championships held in September.

“This was by far one of our most successful show seasons”, said **Karen Harkin**, GVDS President. “We are fortunate to have some exceptional trainers in our area as well as outstanding horses and riders. Competition was tough in some divisions, but our horse and rider teams rose to the top as was evident in the results. GVDS’s focus is on education for not only our riders, but for others who may be new to dressage. We frequently bring in national clinicians to help us improve our skills.”

GVDS hosts seven dressage shows each year at the Mesa County Fairgrounds. Additionally, riders and their horses travel to other parts of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona to show.

GVDS is the third largest chapter of the Rocky Mountain Dressage Society (RMDS) with over 110 members covering all counties west of the Continental Divides, the four corners region of western Colorado, plus Utah, and Wyoming.

Dressage is a concentrated discipline of horsemanship that creates a bond that enables the horse and rider to communicate seamlessly through the rider’s aides, primarily the seat, legs, and hands. This results in what appears a ballet-like dance between horse and rider. These aides are nearly invisible creating a non-verbal type of communication. The horse appears to be performing on its own.

As a horse and rider progresses through the dressage levels, the horse willingly performs the difficult tasks asked of it by its rider with style and grace. The highest level, Grand Prix, is what is performed in Olympic competition. Frequently dressage riders enter the sport later in their lives, with many of them being over age 55.

GVDS begins its show season on April 20-21, 2024, at the Mesa County Fairgrounds, officiated by nationally rated judge Janey “Dolly” Hannon. More information about GVDS, dressage and upcoming events are available at www.gvds.org

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