

"Horses are good for a community. Margaret (Rich) and Lorraine (Harrington) have done a fabulous job over the years to help pull this together. Many people have worked hard to keep this a horsey area."

- Pat Ommert

"Our primary goals are to preserve trails and open some new ones, and to educate the community about the importance of having open space."

- Lorraine Harrington
Temecula Valley Rural Lifestyles

"I think what made (the opening) significant, and we don't often get an opportunity to have moments like that, is that it represented how disparate groups came together to celebrate a milestone."

- Chuck Washington
Riverside County Supervisor

"The opening of the Pat Ommert trail marks a huge milestone in the 15-plus years of work put forth by the trail committee, working closely with the County and local horsemen to make this happen. The completion of this trail is just the beginning with many more segments to follow. Eventually horse enthusiasts, walkers, and cyclists will have miles and miles of trails at their access, providing a wonderful way to savor The Temecula Wine Country."

- Margaret Rich
Green Acres Ranch

"The idea of the trails network is to try to get people safely from wherever they live and ride horseback to the CRC Ranch or Galway Downs."

- Juanita Koch
Temecula Eq-Wine Riders

TEMECULA TRAIL MAP
<https://bit.ly/temeculatrails>



Photo courtesy Chuck Washington

Legendary horsewoman Pat Ommert of Temecula cuts the ceremonial ribbon to open the Pat Ommert Trail, flanked by (from left) Riverside County COO Juan Perez, County Supervisor Chuck Washington, County staff member Phayvanh Nanthavongdouangsy, and emcee Mark Madsen.



Photo courtesy Temecula Eq-Wine Riders

The first riders head down the Pat Ommert Trail along DePortola Road after a ribbon-cutting Feb. 22.

After long ride to completion, Temecula trail advocates celebrate

FROM HORSETRADER STAFF

TEME CULA – Travelers along DePortola Road aren't accustomed to big commotions on a Thursday morning, but there it was on Feb. 22: dozens of observers, several dignitaries, a mounted posse, even media.

It was a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Pat Ommert Trail. After 15 years of dedicated work, the stars had finally aligned and the 2.3-mile trail through Valle de los Caballos, linking Anza Road to the vineyards, would officially open.

The brightest star, legendary horsewoman and lifelong horse advocate Pat Ommert, arrived promptly at 11 a.m. -- pulled at age 94 by a team of draft horses instead of Roman Riding them as she gracefully did for decades.



Photo courtesy Temecula Eq-Wine Riders

Temecula's equestrian and winery interests recognize the lifestyle blend that is blossoming in their community.

When she cut the ribbon, flanked by Riverside County officials including Supervisor Chuck Washington, about five dozen supporters, sponsors and trail users cheered.

"The opening of the Pat Ommert trail marks a huge milestone in the 15-plus years of work put forth by the trail committee, working closely with the County and local horsemen to make this happen," said Margaret Rich of Green Acres Ranch. "The completion of this trail is just the beginning with many more segments to follow. Eventually horse enthusiasts, walkers, and cyclists will have miles and miles of trails at their access, providing a wonderful way to savor The Temecula Wine Country."

The ride to completion of this trail had been a long one, its roots going back more than a

half-century to when Ommert founded the Rancho California Horsemen's Association (RCHA). This community has long been an equestrian hub, home to world class trainers in varied disciplines over the years, from grand prix jumpers to performance Quarter Horse stars. Trail riding is a lifestyle, and its place amid wine country creates a unique blend. Various organizations, the Temecula Valley Rural Lifestyles (TVRL), the RCHA, and the Temecula Valley Horsemen's Association (TVHA) in particular, worked together and with the County through obstacles to reach success – and a special tribute for a special horsewoman.

"First, a major thing was to honor Pat," Lorraine Harrington, a director of the TVRL, said of the ribbon-cutting's significance.

SEE TRAIL, PAGE 26



Horse trailer photo

Pat Ommert arrives for the Feb. 22 ribbon-cutting of the trail named in her honor.

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“She deserves to have a concrete legacy of everything that she’s done for this community – I don’t think anybody has any idea how many hours she herself spent up in the county offices in Riverside, working on this stuff dating back to 1969.

“She really helped create the original trail maps. They’ve been altered quite often since then, but she deserves it. We’ve honored her in many – ways we honored her 90th birthday, we honored the 50th anniversary of her riding club – but this concrete legacy on a trail that she rides almost daily really means a lot to her. That’s the main thing. The community recognized what she has done.

“Second,” she added, “I think a very significant point is that this represents a real partnership with the County of Riverside that we’ve been striving for decades to work on these trails.”

Harrington worked on ad hoc committees for years to help define the “Wine Country Plan”

at the county level. The committee had no equestrian representation when she first volunteered in 2006. Five equestrians eventually joined the 18-member task force, representing equestrians, vineyards and residents. Eight years of work later, a map was approved by the county.

“Now we’re working to make all those trails real, and to make them safe,” she said. “And with the growth of the area, that means fencing and borders on on a lot of the ones that are along roadways.”

Supervisor Washington agreed that the trail opening celebrated the long-running effort.

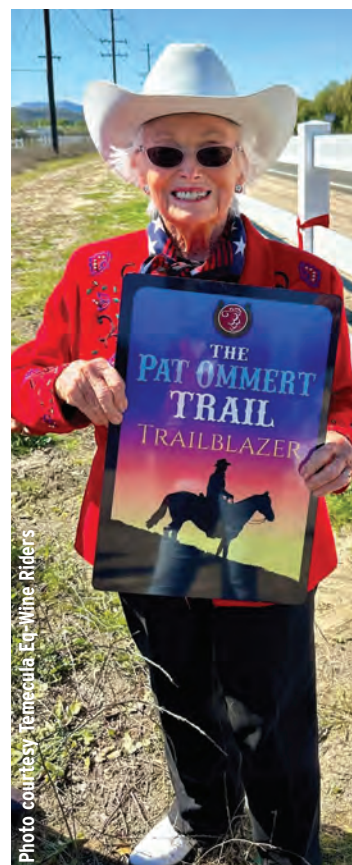
“I think what made it significant -- and we don’t often get an opportunity to have moments like that -- is that it represented how disparate groups came together to celebrate a milestone,” he said. “It should have been an inspiration to a number of people that we’re doing some big things -- we just got this done and we can do more of this. And I think now a lot of folks have

confidence that we can not just dream about it or have visions about it, but actually come together and get it done.”

Harrington said the next segment of trail to be dedicated will be on March 27 for the KenTina Trail, named for Galway Downs owners Ken and Tina Smith. The Smiths, along with Bob and Erin Brown, owners of CRC Ranch, were major local sponsors on the Pat Ommert Trail effort, which also received \$130,000 in County funds. The TVRL’s Second Annual Gala Fundraiser will take place April 11 at Europa Village.

“I think we have real momentum now,” Harrington said. “And there is a lot of cooperation right now --the beginning of a real partnership with the County to do it because that wasn’t there before. So, thanks to Supervisor Washington and his chief of staff because they’ve really decided this is important for the community and that it really fits the community.”

MORE ONLINE:
<http://bit.ly/403trail>



Cowgirl Hall of Famer and Temecula horsewoman, Pat Ommert.

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