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Contact:

Leslie Thurston, Executive Director
Washington State Horse Park
(877) 635-4111
director@wahorsepark.org

Washington State Horse Park
PO Box 278, Cle Elum, WA 98922
www.wahorsepark.org

Horse Park's Covered Arena Project Receives State Funding

CLE ELUM, WA— A covered equestrian arena for the Washington State Horse Park in Cle Elum took a big stride forward last week, as state lawmakers approved a \$4.6 billion capital budget. Included in the budget is \$2.0 million in funding for the Horse Park project.

“Thanks to hard work by Senator Judy Warnick and others, this major achievement starts us on a path toward breaking ground” said Todd Trewin, eventing Olympian and President of the WA State Horse Park Authority Board. “We’ve designed an arena that will allow the Park to host larger events, expand our season from five to nine months, and broaden the range of equestrian disciplines we serve.”

The \$4.6 million arena project includes a 150 x 300 ft. competition space surrounded by a 25 ft. overhang – about an acre under cover - plus related infrastructure improvements and visitor amenities. It will be the centerpiece of the 112-acre Park, which brings over 30 thousand tourists to Kittitas County and an estimated \$3.0 million in local economic benefits annually.

Said Senator Warnick, also a member of the Park’s Authority Board, “Despite its name, the Park isn’t a state agency. It’s a non-profit that has generated broad support from the horse community. This is only the second time the Park has asked the state for funding, the first being for seed money to open in 2010. It has a self-sustaining operating budget and is a terrific example of a private public partnership.”

The covered arena project was cited as a high priority strategic objective of the Kittitas County Tourism Infrastructure Plan and Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Plans in 2016. The project was approved last year by the Kittitas County Board of County Commissioners to receive \$1.5 million in a County Lodging Tax capital grant. The state’s \$2.0 million support provides the required matching funds for the county grant to move forward.

In addition, private funding of \$113,000 has been raised for the project through the Park’s annual fundraising events and corporate sponsorships. Park management plans to step up its efforts with private and public partners to generate the remaining funds for the project.