

Scheduling – for 2011!

No sooner does the current season start – actually just before for Area IV – and the USEA asks for dates for next year. The majority of venues have their traditional dates that have not changed since the particular show started but sometimes external influences have an almost disastrous effect. Last year MACTA's Heritage Park found that hotel rooms had nearly tripled in price for their date. The reason was that NASCAR had scheduled a car race on the same weekend at the Kansas Motor Speedway and so even hotels more than thirty miles away charged what they thought the market would bear. Other venues have run into university homecomings or football games and had similar problems.

Scheduling is made even more difficult as Spring storms or even snow discourage dates before May while the heat of August and the American Eventing Championships in September (now with an even longer effective duration including the drive to & from Georgia) take out further opportunities. This leaves just June and July plus, to avoid a possible early Winter, a couple of weeks in October.

It may not be well known but all equestrian dates are based on the date for the Kentucky Derby and, more directly for our sport, Rolex. In 2011, this will be a week early – the so-called "Rolex Rollback". This makes early June dates clash with the end of the school year and, unfortunately for our Area, means that the majority of our venues have to run consecutively without the luxury of buffer weekends between them. This is compounded by the fact that the majority of HTs are all well within a day's drive of each other. Area eventers are part trucker and most don't shy at drives of well over ten hours to a show - Briar Fox in southern Kansas had entries this Spring from Iowa plus riders from Texas & Colorado as well and has had some from as far afield as Minnesota!

But it's not all doom & gloom for 2011. The majority of venues will continue on their traditional dates and we're looking forward to the possibility of two new venues west of Minneapolis, one of which will replace Trott Brook, which is closing after a long presence on the Area IV scene. Trott Brook's final show will be an unrecognized HT as a fund raiser for the new Steepleview HT which we, as eventers, must be grateful for and thank them for passing the torch in such a friendly and longsighted manner.

Wishing both Competitors and organizers alike a successful season this year.

John Clarke
Area IV Chairman