

Darrell Vik

South Dakota Horse Council Horse Person of the Year

Darrell Vik of Beresford, SD has been honored as the 2017 South Dakota Horse Council Horse Person of the Year. Darrell, born and raised in South Dakota, began his horse career at the age of 5 and is known throughout the state and nationally as a horseman, trainer, and businessman. Whether attending a horse show or horse sale, you are sure to come across someone who has been helped by Darrell, had a horse trained by him, or shown against him. His impact on the horse community spans across several generations – people of all ages have a story to tell about how Darrell shaped their involvement with and love of horses.



Some of Darrell's accomplishments include owning and operating a training stable for over 40 years where he trained horses for riding and driving for clients from 9 states and Canada. He has also exhibited a six-horse hitch of Percheron geldings across the upper Midwest at shows and provided entertainment at numerous fairs, parades, and rodeos. In 1976 Darrell travelled to Washington, D.C. as the featured horse trainer representing South Dakota for the nation's Bicentennial celebration. While there, his demonstrations of hitching and driving horses drew crowds in excess of 80,000 people per day. Driving a team of horses down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House is an honor of which Darrell is extremely proud. He also has a carriage service and has provided rides for newlyweds on their special day as well as giving thousands of rides during the Christmas season and other celebrations.

Darrell's greatest impact can be seen in the love and knowledge of horses he has passed along to his two children. His daughter Danelle can drive the big hitches as skillfully as her dad and his son Dillon is already an accomplished driver winning the youth cart and team classes at various shows. Darrell has also coached 4-H youth drivers at the county and state level and has provided teams for the youth to show in 4-H competitions if they didn't happen to own their own draft horses.

The South Dakota Horse Council will present Darrell with this award at the Dakota Royal Charity Draft Horse Show June 24th in Brookings, SD. We are pleased to honor him and all his accomplishments and impact he has made on the South Dakota horse industry.