Area trail riders are being asked to saddle up their horses for the third annual Heartland Saddle Club competitive trail challenge.

As part of the American Competitive Trail Horse Association (ACTHA) organization, this friendly competition is used to promote and encourage the use of the versatile trail horse.

This year's competition will be headquartered at the Eagle Canyon Campground on the south side of Lake McConaughy, northwest of Ogallala, on Saturday, Sept. 22, beginning at 10 a.m. MT.

The Heartland Saddle Club uses this as their only fundraising project for the year and a portion of the proceeds is given to area non-profit animal shelters.

Horses and riders are scored during the ride, as different obstacles along the trail are encountered, on a six-seven mile scenic trail. Several classes of entry are available from youths, to less experienced riders, and up to advanced riders, as well as "buddy" riders who do not compete, but want to go along for the ride.

Riders need not be a member of ACTHA to participate, but participants, including buddy riders, must enter online at www.actha.us.

Families or small groups of friends are allowed to ride together at their own pace, between each judges stop, with the only time limits required being each obstacle itself.

Following the Saturday competition, a free cowboy church service on Sunday morning, Sept. 23, with an area trail ride to follow, is also being planned.

For those interested in attending the Sunday ride, please contact Darren Jensen at 308-352-8029. There is no charge for the Sunday ride.

Cabins and stalls are avail-able for those families or individuals wanting to come and spend the weekend enjoying quality time and relaxing with their horse near the lake.

For more details, see www.nebraskahorse.info website.