

Horse power: Mustangs for Mustangs

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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BETHALTO - Fast cars, a flea market, and formerly-wild horses attracted several visitors to **St. Louis Regional Airport** Saturday.

The benefit, called "**Mustangs for Mustangs**," was the result of a partnership between the **Legendary Mustang Sanctuary** of Alhambra, Illinois and the **Southern Illinois**

Mustang Association Car Club. It featured both tamed mustangs available for viewing and petting, and **Ford Mustangs** available for viewing (but not petting).

"Mustang horses and cars bring the eras together," **Legendary Mustang Sanctuary Director Kathy Lewis** said. "The cars were named after the horses."

Lewis runs the sanctuary with her husband, **Shawn Lewis**. The couple began working to rescue wild mustangs being relocated by the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** in 2007. They were inspired by what Kathy Lewis said were unsettling discoveries about the final destinations of some of the formerly-wild mustangs they discovered through internet searches. In 2011, the sanctuary received its 501(c)3 recognition.

To give the formerly wild mustangs a chance to be adopted, Kathy Lewis said she and her husband use "natural horsemanship" to settle them down enough to find "forever homes."

"We spend a lot of time and patience getting them to trust us," she said. "Once they trust you, you'll have their hearts and they'll do anything for you."



The car show and flea market at the airport were put together to raise awareness and donations for the Legendary Mustang Sanctuary. The staff of the sanctuary is 100 percent volunteer and the money goes to feeding and housing the horses and burros while they are trained.

Burros are types of wild donkeys, introduced to the Southwestern United States in the 1500s by Spanish Conquistadors. Kathy Lewis said the BLM is removing mustangs and burros from the once wild west to make room for cattle ranchers, oil fracking and other forms of resource extraction and land usage.

"We're not just doing something to save the horses, we're doing something to save a part of American history," Kathy Lewis said.

The horses not taken to sanctuaries are held in government holding facilities. Thousands of horses are in such facilities currently. Some horses are moved from adoption facility to adoption facility up to three times. Kathy Lewis called these "three strikers." Legendary Mustang Sanctuary will accept such horses and claims a 100 percent success rate through their program.

The event continued from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at the St. Louis Regional Airport. More information about the Legendary Mustang Sanctuary can be found by calling (618) 616-8875 or emailing legendarymustangsanctuary@yahoo.com.

