

Mike Taft, Springfield, IL (incumbent)

As an incumbent and member for over 40 years, I have seen the Association grow, go through growing pains and become stronger. I have served on many committees; most recently the committee serving the youth of our association. I was given the task of assembling a great group of members to create a new program for the future generations of our association. This program is very important to me and I was excited to be the chair because I have 2 young daughters who love the breed and are anxious to be involved, whether in the show ring or the barn at home. The committee has created a program that will be open for all Clydesdale youth to be competitive, not just those that show. There is so much more to our breed than what can be seen in the show ring. We plan to introduce the program to the membership at the National Sale.

For those who do not know me, our farm, Double Shoe Clydesdales is located in Springfield, IL., home of the 2025 World Clydesdale Show. We are a family operation that every year breeds several of our own and outside mares to our stallion, Freedom Majestic Liverpool. We show throughout the Midwest at both county and state fairs. We show in riding, line classes, and hitch classes, from the cart through the six. We have also participated in the 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2018 World Clydesdale Shows and are anxious to exhibit in 2025. Additionally, we participate in educational events, such as the Illinois Horse Fair, local school visits, nursing home visits, parades and judging events that need volunteer horses.

My vision for the association is simple; I want to work cooperatively and to continue helping make the association stronger. I would like to help people, no matter how many horses they have or what their horse use is (breeding, exhibiting, parading, trail riding, or field work) become more involved in the association, to make it grow. Our family supports and is involved in all uses of the breed. I am always available to help new and existing members who have questions. If I don't know the answer, I will find out and we will learn together. I am very thankful that we have been able to raise our children with their Clydesdale family, knowing they are making friends, enjoying positive competition and having experiences that will last a lifetime.

I have dedicated my life to the Equine Industry and would like to continue to be a representative for you and for this amazing Clydesdale breed. Thank you for considering me to represent you and your needs.