



DTHA

Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Journal

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Is this what Delaware wants?

As we embark upon the opening of another race meet I have found myself reflecting upon where we were at Delaware Park this time some 20 years ago. Some of you may recall that Delaware Park in the early 90's was in turmoil and horse racing was all but dead. Our purses were very low and our fields were uncompetitive. We were dying a slow death!

But, in 1994, the General Assembly created and passed the Horse Racing Redevelopment Act that gave us new life. This Act allowed for video lottery terminals to be installed at the three existing racetracks in the state, Delaware Park, Dover Downs and Harrington Raceway. This Act allowed for the state, the tracks and the horsemen to share in the revenue generated by the VLT's. Currently, the video lottery revenue will continue to be 9% again this year. Sports betting revenue we receive is 9.6%, and when table games begin to operate, the purse account will receive 4.5% of that revenue.

Table games are projected to be up and running on Memorial Day, starting with poker and in full operation by mid-summer.

However, in recent months there has been talk of free-standing casinos or the possibility of other racino's to be built. Our association has been involved with this debate from the beginning and believes that if one more license is granted to a new casino operator it will spell the beginning of the end for us.

I have heard rumblings of "WHY" should all this money go to a "dying industry" and "WHY" should the horses benefit from the slots and not education, health or senior citizens? This so-called "dying industry" here at Delaware Park pumps almost \$30.1 million hard dollars into the New Castle County economy, not counting the folks that move here and rent homes.

How do we know this? In 2004, we, along with the Delaware Standardbred Owners Association (DSOA), supported an in-depth study by the Department of Agriculture of the equine industry in Delaware. The results were unexpected, but great news for our small state.

We learned that because of the tremendous success of the Horse Racing Redevelopment Act, our Delaware Certified Program, the DSOA Breeders Program, and the tracks staying competitive, we are the second largest agri-business industry in the state, only surpassed by the poultry industry. Back in 2004 we pumped more than \$341 million dollars a year into our state. We estimate that number has increased by some 20% since then.

The question now, why should our legislators be willing to put all this into jeopardy? Are they willing to "bet our farms" that these new operators will allow us to survive in an already demanding and competitive market? We are competing with Charles Town that has table games, Maryland will open soon enough, and Chester has been online now for almost a

year, with table games adding even more competition with Delaware Park.

Hundreds of jobs in the horse racing industry will be lost, taxes that are paid to the state will no longer be paid. The farm owners will suffer and our Delaware Certified Program will not provide enough incentive for owners to continue to send their horses to Delaware farmland. Homes also will be sold by many who moved here and decided to raise their families here.

We believe that if they introduce 1, 2, 10 or whatever number of new casinos, it will spell the beginning of the end for horsemen and horse racing in Delaware. The new venues will simply divide the existing market, but more importantly, it will place the three current tracks at a huge competitive disadvantage. Then the question becomes... "WHY" should the tracks support racing anyway? "WHY" should they continue to provide the backstretch operations and all the services needed to run a meet when we are losing on our VLT's and other games? The answer is simple...they won't...and we will all lose.

In closing, the relationship between the tracks, the state and the horsemen is strong and binding. This agri-business model that the state has long endorsed, and is envied by our competitors has supported so many horses, farms, businesses, and the state with revenue for years. Why are they willing to put all of this into question? Are they willing to accept the promises from this contractor or some out of state operator - when we all have had something that's been working so good for so long?

It's time for each and every one of you to find out who your state legislators are and give them a call. If you don't know, stop by the Horsemen's Office and we will give you the contact information that you need.

The Horsemen's Office is open every day from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Our office is located next to the Tack Shop across from the security gate. Kim Sprenger, Program Coordinator, and I will be on hand for all your horsemen's needs. Stop in for overnights, condition books, sales catalogues, faxes, etc. or just to say hello. We can be reached at (302) 994-2521 ext. 7284.



Bessie Gruwell
Executive Director

Welcome back,

Bessie



50% Bonuses continue for 2010!!

A \$\$ million thanks and a \$\$ million reasons to get your horses Delaware Certified!

The 2009 racing season set a new all-time high for the Delaware Bred or Certified Thoroughbred Program (DCTP). A record number of starters, a record number of winners and a record number of bonuses were paid to owners and certifiers. In 2009 the total bonuses paid topped over \$1 million for 922 starters that recorded 105 wins, 120 places and 121 thirds.

Our thanks to everyone who supports our program. A special thanks to the DCTP farm participants who have shared in our vision and commitment to grow the state's agribusiness economy and thoroughbred racing in Delaware! With 74 farms now participating, the DCTP is a significant contributor to Delaware's agricultural economy and fosters the preservation of farmland. We think of the DCTP as "Delaware's Winning Economic Stimulus Program!"

Not only has the DCTP paid millions of dollars to owners and certifiers, but the state is benefiting by the preservation of farmland and farm owners, feed companies, blacksmiths, veterinarians and stable help are also beneficiaries of the program's success.

As the program continues to grow, an additional 482 two-year-old thoroughbreds are eligible to go to post this year and race for the certifier purse enhancements at Delaware Park. There are now over 2,100 thoroughbreds enrolled in the program and owners and certifiers have been paid over \$3 million in bonuses to date.

The Delaware Certified Program will continue to offer the combined 50% bonus (25% to the certifier and 25% to the owner) during the 2010 race meet, which ultimately results in 90% of the winning purse! That's right, 90%!

The 2010 meet will run four DCTP stakes races. The Small Wonder and The First State Dash are both 2-year-old Delaware Bred or Certified restricted five and one half furlongs stake races,

each with a purse of \$75,000. The Tax Free Shopping Distaff and The New Castle are both \$75,000 six furlong stake races for Delaware Bred or Certified horses three and up. All four have free nominations and will run on Saturday, October 16, 2010.

In order to be eligible for certification, horses must complete a minimum of ninety (90) consecutive days on an approved DCTP farm or training facility. Certification applications will not be accepted after December 31st of the yearling year.

There are a \$\$ MILLION reasons to get your young horses to a Delaware farm. For information about the Delaware Bred or Certified Thoroughbred Program, contact (302) 994-2398; email dctp@dtha.com, or visit www.dtha.com and click on the DCTP link to download an application or to find a list of participating Delaware farms. From the website, you can check to see if your horse of racing age is Delaware Certified.

The Fifth Annual DCTP Awards banquet is scheduled for Friday, May 7 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Delaware Park's White Clay Creek Country Club. Awards will be presented to the leading DCTP certifiers with the highest earnings in six different categories, the leading DCTP horse and the leading DCTP certifier whose horses accumulated the highest overall bonuses in the program. Also receiving awards will be "Open Stake Winners", any Delaware Bred or Certified horse that won an open stake at any racetrack in 2009. If you would like to attend, please call our office at (302) 994-2398.

Here's wishing you a rewarding 2010 meet!



In Memoriam

David Taylor passed away February 26 at his home. He had been a trainer at Delaware Park for many years. David was married to his longtime sweetheart Kendra for 28 years. He will be missed by his family and many friends.



Ricky Ragunan, 47 years old, born June 22, 1962 in Trinidad passed away on March 10, 2010 in Camden, South Carolina. Ricky loved working with horses and worked as an exercise rider at Delaware Park for the past five years. He is survived by his longtime friend and companion Julie Gordon as well as his son, daughter and mother. He was known by many here at Delaware Park and will be missed by all of those who knew him.



DTHA Political Action Committee Fund Request

Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association formed a political action committee called the DTHA Winner's Circle PAC Fund. The importance of an adequate PAC Fund is made clear in Bessie Gruwell's Executive Director article. We are asking all owners and trainers to "opt in" for a one-time donation of \$50.00 to the PAC from funds in their horsemen's bookkeeper's account. The funds that you contribute allow us to support the legislators that support us. In order for our Horsemen's Association to stay abreast of legislative issues and have a voice, we need your support. The donation is voluntary and contributions to the PAC are not tax deductible for Federal or State income tax purposes. Authorization forms may be obtained from the Horsemen's Office or the Horsemen's Bookkeeping Office.

Horsemen's Rate at the Courtyard Marriott

The Courtyard Marriott, located off Churchman's Road just outside Delaware Park, now offers horsemen's rates. When horsemen call to reserve a room, let them know you are a horseman at Delaware Park to receive the great rate of \$79 per night. Please call direct (302) 456-3800.



Horsemen's Assistance Fund is ready to provide health, recreation and other benefits during 2010 meet

With the 2010 racing season about to start, the Delaware Horsemen's Assistance Fund, Inc. would like to welcome horsemen and their employees to Delaware Park. It has been a very challenging winter, especially for those who remained here for winter stabling.

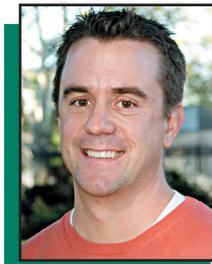
Our organization has experienced a reduction in revenue during the past year, which is a reflection of the overall economy. We are pleased to announce that all benefit levels remain the same, despite the loss of income. We have supplemented these losses by adding new fundraising efforts. A special thanks from our board to Paul Trapani, who started our boat donation program last fall. He has handled the advertising, phone calls, boat pickups, repairs, and sales of the donated boats. This new fundraising program has produced over \$5,000 since fall, which directly helps to fund our benefit programs. Anyone interested in donating or purchasing a donated boat, please contact Paul for details at (410) 885-5656.

The DHAF is looking for co-sponsors for two of our Backstretch Barbeques this year. Last year, Pine View trucking graciously co-sponsored a chicken barbeque during the summer. It was a huge success. We are anticipating the same event again this year. Any vendor, vet practice, van company, etc. who can help sponsor one of our other two barbeques is greatly needed and appreciated. Please contact Lynda Furlong at (302) 994-2521 ext. 7289 for more information.

All of our benefit programs are resumed as of April 1st this year for trainers allotted stalls during the 2010 season. Please contact Lynda Furlong at extension 7289 or stop by the benefit office located in the Dayroom building for more information about our programs. Wes Jones and Lissette Alfaro are available for counseling needs. Wes can be reached at (302) 383-7233.

Counselor's Corner

Welcome back! If you or anyone you work with is going through a difficult time you can contact me confidentially to discuss those matters. My office is located above the Horsemen's Office with a private entrance located on the left side of the building. My spring hours were effective April 1st and are posted in the Horsemen's Office and Wellness Clinic. You can also reach me anytime on my cell phone (302) 383-7233.



G. Wes Jones,
LCSW

Along with me, we have the services of Lissette Alfaro. She will be with us six hours per week during the live meet where she will be providing counseling services to our Spanish-speaking horsemen. In addition, we have started holding our weekly recovery meeting upstairs in the Horsemen's Office at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Please see the Horsemen's Office or the Clinic for hours as they are posted monthly.

The Wellness Clinic will begin increasing their schedule as needed. All licensed backstretch trainers and workers can receive free medical care through the clinic on a first-come, first-served basis. Approved prescriptions issued through the clinic can be filled for a nominal co-pay. Our dental program has remained the same, which offers limited benefits for new employees and a maximum of \$900 annually to returning employees. We also offer eye exams and glasses, and a daycare reimbursement program.

Armando Gonzalez will be operating the Backstretch Boutique among his other duties. It is open Tuesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Dayroom building. Free clothing and other items are available at the Boutique. The DHAF is always in need of items, and any items you may donate are eligible for a tax donation receipt. For employees living at Delaware Park, we have mattresses available for distribution. There is a limited number, and they will be distributed one per employee as needed until gone. We are anticipating more mattresses during June. Brother Chris has restarted his Catholic worship services held at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays in the Dayroom building. We will keep you updated about the start date and time of other worship services offered.

From the DHAF and its employees, we wish you a healthy, happy, and prosperous 2010 meet.



Winter Stall Rent Rebate

This is a reminder that per our contract "Delaware Park shall charge \$8 per day per stall for winter stabling and training. Horsemen who pay stall rent for winter stabling shall receive a rebate of one month's stall rent for one stall for each start from Opening Day of the meet through July 31st. No one horseman may receive more than three month's stall rent rebate."

So if you were stabled at Delaware Park for the full winter and paid in a timely manner you are entitled to receive your stall rebate for January, February and March.

DTHA Defined Contribution Plan

This is a reminder that Delaware trainers and all backstretch personnel should take the once a year opportunity to sign up for the backstretch Defined Contribution Plan (retirement plan).

A representative of the plan will be in the Horsemen's Office on Tuesday, June 15 and Thursday, June 17, 2010. These will be the ONLY two dates available, so please make every effort to sign up. You must bring your current Delaware Park badge along with proof of working at Delaware Park in 2009. Your 2009 W2 or 1099 forms from your employer will be sufficient.

For further information, call the Horsemen's Office at (302) 994-2521, ext. 7284.





Delaware
Thoroughbred
Horsemen's Association, Inc.

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Wilmington, DE 19804

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Welcome Back

SEE YOU IN THE WINNER'S CIRCLE



Dear Trainer:

Welcome back! MOC is excited to continue providing insurance services for DTHA members! As we are painfully aware, other states continue to face insurance challenges in these challenging economic times. We are pleased to offer DTHA members a straightforward insurance program that features:

- No rate increase for the 2010 policy year.
- Continuation of an all-inclusive workers' comp, trainer's accident and health and general liability policy. The only one of its kind in the thoroughbred racing industry!
- A rate that is based on a per-stall, per-day basis.

The success of this program relies upon communication on all levels; MOC, DTHA and YOU! As always, please feel free to call us if you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the workers' compensation program. The subject of workers' compensation can be confusing and frustrating by nature; pick up the phone and call MOC and we will clarify any questions so you can get back to running your racing stable.

Stay safe,

John Patrick Unick
President
(415) 357-9219

Sara Przemielewski
Manager
(415) 357-9234

Frankie Spitaleri
Account Executive
(415) 357-9229

DTHA General Election 2010

The DTHA will hold its general election for the board in October 2010. Besides the president, there are ten director positions available (five owners and five trainers). If you are interested in running for the board or would like to nominate someone please contact the Horsemen's Office (302) 994-2521 ext. 7284.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Backstretch Retirement Sign Up	June 15 / 17
General Membership/ Nominating Meeting	July 24
DTHA Horsemen's Classic	September 10
Owners Day	September 11
DCTP Stake Day	October 16

DTHA Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. in the Horsemen's Office. All owners and trainers are encouraged to attend.

Editor's Note

The Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Journal is published monthly. Members are invited to submit suggestions for future articles and letters to the editor. Contact Kim Sprenger at (302) 994-2521, ext. 7284; Fax (302) 994-3392.

Note: your newsletter is online at www.dtha.com