

Horse Racing Industry Report

A publication of the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association

Winter 2004

Ontario Horse Racing Booth wins Award at Royal Winter Fair

The Ontario horse racing industry won the award for Best Booth for a Commercial Exhibit at this year's Royal Winter Fair. Voting for the award was based on appearance, public preference and staff interaction. The booth was the only designated Equine Education centre for 2003. Hundreds of school children visited the booth each day and were provided with educational information on equine health, nutrition and other basic horse matters. The booth also hosted a live horse, massage therapy sessions, veterinary students from the Ontario Veterinary College, chiropractor



demonstrations and other hands on items for children and adults to learn more about horses.

The Ontario horse-racing booth was a joint effort of the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of Ontario, Ontario Harness Horse Association, Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society, Longrun Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, Ontario Standardbred Adoption Society, Woodbine Entertainment Group and the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association.

Barn Fire Safety

OHRIA launched an industry-wide barn fire safety program. The program promotes barn fire safety best practices through awareness campaigns, and educational and training seminars. "As an organization representing horsepeople, we must work with the racetracks, training facilities and breed farmers to minimize the risk of fires and ensure that these are safe places for our members to work," said Jim Whelan, President of the Ontario Harness Horse Association. "In particular, we have zero tolerance for smoking in the barns and immediate vicinities. Barns and cigarettes do not mix."

"The industry-wide fire safety program builds on the significant steps we have taken at Mohawk and Woodbine Racetracks to improve fire safety. New barns have been built with early fire detection devices and sprinklering; fire suppression equipment has been upgraded; and, track offi-

cial and back stretch workers have been trained in fire prevention and fire suppression," said David S. Willmot, Chairman and CEO of the Woodbine Entertainment Group. "We hired a fire safety manager, former Etobicoke Fire Prevention Chief Bob Webb to develop our programs and conduct fire training. To date almost 2,000 people have been trained," continued Willmot.

In addition to the fire safety program, racetracks are required to have a fire safety plan in place as a condition of its racetrack license from the Ontario Racing Commission. Barn Fire Safety Tips posters, brochures and copies of the commitment letter have been distributed to all racetracks. These materials are also posted in PDF on the OHRIA website www.ohria.com. Training sessions will begin in the Spring of 2004.

Equine Guelph

In September 2003, OHRIA entered into agreement with the University of Guelph to support research and education at Equine Guelph. OHRIA will continue to provide funding for Equine Guelph based on a levy on pari-mutuel wagering in Ontario.

The total amount contributed from the Ontario racing industry in 2003 was \$540,000; OHRIA's portion being \$250,000. The other industry participants include, \$90,000 from EP Taylor, \$100,000 from The Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of Ontario and \$100,000 from the Ontario Harness Horse Association.

Previous research has focused on the development of a vaccine to prevent an often-fatal equine pneumonia, a major economic loss to the breeding industry. Research has also focused on the acute outbreak of fatal respiratory disease seen in Ontario in the fall of 2002. The results will assist in the upgrading of current commercial vaccines to cover this form of Herpes virus. This recent outbreak significantly impacted racing stock, and yearlings going through the auction ring.

OHRIA Congratulates Sovereign Winners

The 29th Annual Sovereign Awards ceremony was held on December 6, 2003. Outstanding performances in the thoroughbred racing industry were recognized.

“On behalf of the board and members of OHRIA, I would like to congratulate the winners and the nominees in all categories,” said Wendy Rinella, “2003 has been an exciting year for thoroughbred racing in Canada with the success of Wando, our Canadian Triple Crown Champion.” Wando was selected by industry members as the Horse of the Year and received the Master Sovereign Awards Trophy.

Highlights of the Sovereign Award winners who received their replicas of St. Simon for outstanding performances in 2003 included: Todd Kabel – Outstanding Jockey, Robert Tiller – Outstanding Trainer, Stronach Stable – Outstanding Owner and Sam-Son Farm – Outstanding Breeder.

West End Kids Christmas Party

- Windsor Raceway and the Ontario Harness Horse Association hosted their fourth annual Christmas Party for 100 less fortunate school kids grades 1 to 3 on Monday, December 8th, 2003.
- Children received their own individually wrapped Christmas gift. One hundred families from the four schools also received a \$25.00 food certificate.

Juravinski Roast Raises \$40,000.00

- On November 26 a total of \$40,000 was raised as the Horse racing industry came together to recognize Charles Jurvinski and support two worthy causes: Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada and the Ontario Standardbred Adoption Society.

Grand Opening of Two new Racetrack / Slot Facilities

In October, the Western Fair Association completed a \$42 million expansion and improvements renovation. The October 31st Grand Opening was held in conjunction with the four \$100,000 Ontario Sires Stakes (OSS) Grassroots Finals for two-year-olds.

Tourism London General Manager John Winston said, “By attracting the public to its various events, Western Fair has immeasurable economic impact for the city. You are looking at millions of dollars a year that visitations generate in the city.”

Sixty-one different companies contributed to the over 350 people who were employed in the construction of the new Western Fair Raceway. Other full time and temporary jobs stemming from the racetrack improvements and added agriculture facilities are also anticipated. “We do provide a lot of jobs. It's one whole package”, said Western Fair's Racing and Gaming Manager Rob Wilding.

The second new racing and slot facility Grand River Raceway opened on Saturday, December 16th. 50 Days of harness racing will begin in April on the new half-mile track. With 200 machines the facility is the province's 16th slots-at-racetrack facility. “We are proud to be new members of the Elora community and looking forward to being a part of a mutual and beneficial partnership”, said Grand River Raceway General Manager Ted Clarke.

The \$30 million project was constructed on a 68-acre plot of land featuring a 45,000 square foot main grandstand building. The racetrack will provide new job opportunities for the local and surrounding communities as well as increase year round tourism attraction.

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To be a world class leader in horse racing and breeding