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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Batavia Downs Chosen as Site for 2019 New York Sire Stakes “Night of Champions”**

**SCHENECTADY, N.Y.** – The Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund today announced Batavia Downs Gaming & Hotel as the host of the 2019 New York Sire Stakes Finals, also known as the “Night of Champions.” The Fund’s Board of Trustees selected Batavia Downs Gaming & Hotel at a scheduled board meeting this afternoon, following a proposal submission process. The date for the 2019 Finals has yet to be set.

The Fund invited race tracks from across New York State which host New York Sire Stakes events to submit proposals. Tracks were considered on various criteria including the offering of a 24-hour detention barn, ability to promote the event and offer an exciting fan experience. Batavia Downs Gaming & Hotel was chosen based on the merits of an impressive proposal, and its capacity to host the championship finals for the top state-bred 2 and 3-year-old Standardbred horses.

“Batavia Downs Gaming is extremely proud and excited to have been selected to host the finals of the 2019 New York Sire Stakes,” said Todd Haight, director/GM of live racing at Batavia Downs Racetrack. “This series has annually been a centerpiece of our live racing presentation since its inception in 1965, as our track has been so committed to the development of New York-bred horses going back to the 1950’s when we facilitated our own colt and filly stakes. We look forward to welcoming all the owners, horse people and horses that make the New York Sire Stakes the premier program of its kind, to Batavia Downs to enjoy our new paddock, new hotel and excellent clubhouse facilities.”

“The Sire Stakes Night of Champions shines a spotlight on the excellence of our equine industry, which supports the agricultural economy across the State,” said M. Kelly Young, executive director, Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund. “Having hosted significant New York Sire Stakes events in the past, Batavia Downs Gaming & Hotel will provide an excellent showcase for the 2019 “Night of Champions,” our premier event of the season.” “Batavia Downs offers a fantastic club house and fan experience that will only compliment and outstanding racing program featuring the 2019 Night of Champions” added Young.

The 2018 “Night of Champions” is scheduled for Saturday, September 22, hosted by Yonkers Raceway. The eight race event will hand out \$1.8 million in purse money.

The New York Sire Stakes program promotes the breeding, buying, and racing of Standardbred horses in New York State, and is administered by the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund. It was the first program of its kind, featuring 2 and 3-year old colts and fillies, and has become the model for state-bred racing programs in North America.

**About the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund:**

The Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund is a public benefit corporation established in 1965 by the Laverne Law (Laws of New York, Chapter 567 of the Laws of 1965). The mission of the fund is to promote agriculture through the breeding of Standardbred horses and the conduct of equine research within the state. To carry out its legislative mission, the Fund administers the New York Sire Stakes races, Excelsior/State Fair Series races, and County Fair Races. Additionally, the Fund provides assistance to county agriculture societies and contributes to the statewide 4-H program and to the Harry M. Zweig Fund for Equine Research.

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