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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. Trotting Association District 8 Announces 2019 Award Winners

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. – U.S. Trotting Association (USTA) District 8 has announced the winners of its 2019 year-end awards. George Ducharme has been named Trainer of the Year; Pari-Mutuel Driver of the Year is Tyler Buter; and Claude Huckabone Jr. is the County Fair Driver of the Year.

Ducharme earned \$705,226 in the New York Sire Stakes program this year with 113 starts. His stable was led by 3-year-old trotting filly Sensibility, who earned more than \$250,000, and 2-year-old trotting colt Berkery J, who took home nearly \$150,000. Ducharme was also the leading money earner at his home track, Vernon Downs, with \$213,968 in purses. Overall, Ducharme's horses have banked \$1,940,793 this season and he sports a .415 UTRS.

Buter has \$1.5 million in combined NY Sire Stakes and Excelsior earnings this season and 63 wins on the circuit.

He drove New York County Fair Champions Certify (Credit Winner-Good Intentions) and Roll with Mimi (Roll With Joe-Dream of Mimi) into the winner's circle. He also steered American Mercury to a win in the \$500,000 Messenger Stakes and a third-place finish in the Little Brown Jug. For the year, Buter has guided 306 winners to \$5.2 million in earnings.

Huckabone Jr. finished atop the New York County Fair earnings chart with \$51,514 in 58 starts. He drove 2-year-old colt pacer Flow With Joe (Roll With Joe-Hidden Play) to a County Fair championship, and trained Champion 3-year-old filly pacer Roll With Mimi, whom he drove most of the season.

Awards will be given at the joint NYSS and USTA District 8 Banquet at Saratoga Casino Hotel on Sunday, Nov. 10. Horse of the Year will be announced at the event.

Also honored that evening will be these USTA Divisional Champions:

Mr. Viktor - 3-Year-Old Trotting Colt

Owner: Robert Santagata, Jennifer Lappe, Diamond Pride and Joseph Lee

Trainer: Jennifer Lappe

Winndevie - 3-Year-Old Trotting Filly

Owner: Purple Haze Stables

Trainer: Trond Smedshammer

Hickfromfrenchlick - 3-Year-Old Pacing Colt

Owners: Raymond Schnittker, Nolamaura Racing and Thomas Spatorico

Trainer: Ray Schnittker

Brooklyn Lilacs - 3-Year-Old Pacing Filly
Owner: Crawford Farms Racing
Trainer: Jennifer Bongiorno

Chaptiama - 2-Year-Old Trotting Colt
Owners: Purple Haze Stables
Trainer: Trond Smedshammer

C And T's Credit - 2-Year-Old Trotting Filly
Owner: Peter Barbato and Samuel Bova
Trainer: John Stark Jr.

Cigars And Port - 2-Year-Old Pacing Colt
Owner: Raymond Schnittker, Nolamaura Racing, Theodore Gewertz and Steven Arnold
Trainer: Ray Schnittker

Racine Bell - 2-Year-Old Pacing Filly
Owner: Chris Lawton and Dale Lawton
Trainer: David Dewhurst

“On behalf of our board of directors, I'd like to congratulate this year's winners,” said USTA District 8 Chairman Michael Kane. “These horses and horsemen are shining examples of the level of quality coming out of this area and each has represented this district well, both at home and on the Grand Circuit. We are proud to have this opportunity each year to honor their contributions to our sport.” The award winners were selected in balloting of the New York State race secretaries. Horses were selected from those with ownership in District 8.

Tickets to the awards banquet are \$35.00 and include reception and dinner. Special room rates are available in which banquet guests can receive 15% off a reservation at Saratoga Casino Hotel. [Click here](#) for booking information. A USTA District 8 meeting will precede the banquet and is scheduled for 5 p.m. at the hotel.

Guests are asked to please RSVP no later than Monday, Nov. 4. RSVPs can be given to Sarah Quinn at squinn@caphill.com or 518-694-5002.

Payment should be made out and sent to:

Agriculture & NYS Horse Breeding Fund
c/o CHMS
230 Washington Avenue Extension, Suite 101
Albany, NY 12203

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

The Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund (the 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.

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