

NYS Gaming Commission to host retired racehorse summit on Sept. 1

by Lee Park, director of communications, New York State Gaming Commission

Schenectady, NY --- The New York State Gaming Commission will host a day-long summit focused on the issue of retired racehorses -- both Thoroughbred and Standardbred -- on Tuesday (Sept. 1) at 10 a.m. at the Fasig-Tipton Humphrey S. Finney Pavilion in Saratoga Springs.

This event is designed to focus attention on the issue of racehorse retirement and publicize the current status of New York and national initiatives -- including those ongoing and those developed since the New York Task Force on Retired Racehorses issued recommendations in late 2011. The Summit, beginning at 10 a.m., is free and open to the public.

"The Commission believes that responsible stewardship of the horse includes factoring in the entire life cycle and ensuring that these athletes have viable options once their racing careers are over," said Commission Executive Director Robert Williams. "This event will highlight the steps that have been taken so far and identify the challenges and solutions to promoting responsible aftercare."

"It's our duty to make sure they have access to safe havens once their days on the track are complete," said Sackatoga Stable's Jackson W. Knowlton, a prominent owner and former Task Force Member who has been instrumental in putting together the Summit. "Everyone -- breeders, trainers, owners, track management and more -- have an obligation to work together and address this issue. The Retired Racehorse Summit will showcase some exciting new endeavors being undertaken by the Commission and the industry to bring about real positive change for our horses."

Knowlton will kick-off the event by reviewing the Task Force's key recommendations and discussing the status of ongoing research indicating where horses go after they leave the track. He will also discuss the social responsibility component of the issue.

Fasig-Tipton's Humphrey S. Finney Pavilion is located at East & Madison Avenues in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Tentative panels and participants:

The History & Current Status of Retirement Initiatives & Programs by New York Thoroughbred Horsemen

- Moderated by Eric Wing, Daily Racing Form
- Richard A. Violette, New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Inc.
- Additional Participants TBA

National Leaders in Thoroughbred Retirement

- Stacie Clark Rogers, Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance
- Diana Pikulski, Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation
- Additional Participants and Moderator TBA

Accredited Organizations: Current status & future challenges in providing aftercare to NY-based horses

- Moderated by Jack Wolf, Starlight Racing
- Akindale Thoroughbred Rescue

- Equine Advocates, Inc.
- Finger Lakes Thoroughbred Adoption Program, Inc.
- New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program
- Old Friends
- ReRun

How does the Standardbred industry address retirement?

- Moderated by M. Kelly Young, New York Farm Bureau
- Ellen Harvey, U.S. Trotting Association
- Katherine Starr, Sunshine Horses
- Judith Bokman, Standardbred Retirement Foundation
- Additional Participants TBA

Approaches to aftercare at the Track level

- Moderated by N.Y.S. Gaming Commissioner Peter Moschetti
- Sam Elliott, PARX
- Mike Rogers, Stronach Group
- Mike Ziegler, Churchill Downs
- Additional participants TBA

Looking Forward: What are you willing to do?

- Participants TBA