



Horse Council Courier

The Horsemen's Council of Illinois newsletter dedicated to promoting a healthy horse industry statewide through information and education.

Editorial

As the Courier goes to press

HCI goes to Ag Director, Legislative Committee, Supreme Court speaking for the interests of Illinois horsemen

Long-time spectators of policy making in Springfield deprecatingly call this the silly season...the time when lawmakers entertain frivolous or self-serving pork-barrel proposals, wasting time and taxpayer dollars wrangling in endless debate and partisan logjams.

Truth be told, never have equestrian rights and the horseman's lifestyle been in more jeopardy.

As this issue of the *Courier* is being prepared for printing, Horsemen's Council of Illinois is

...working with the Department of Agriculture to determine precisely if and how Premise ID and the National Animal Identification System will affect horses in Illinois

...appearing at Legislative hearings to halt State plans to cut Extension and 4-H youth program funding

...joining with the American Quarter Horse Association and others in the filing of a "friend of the court" brief, asking the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider a federal appeals court decision upholding an Illinois prohibition that forced the closure of a horse processing plant in Illinois.

In meetings with Tom Jennings, the state's acting Director of Agriculture, HCI is exploring the issues surrounding mandatory vs. voluntary registration of properties with horses, possibly exempting them from future coverage under the NAIS because horses are not food chain animals. For HCI's position on this matter, please see the reference to

HB5776 (Keeps Premise ID Voluntary) in the President's Corner on page 2).

HCI took part in a rare joint committee hearing of the Illinois House and Senate Agriculture and Conservation Committees to address the Governor's decision to freeze funds for agricultural programs.

Prompting the hearing was the Governor's decision to freeze more \$40 million for agriculture programs that are passed through the IDOA budget. The programs impacted by this decision include University of Illinois Extension. All 4-H programs, shows, judging seminars and competitions will be effectively scuttled without this funding. Extension also offers valuable educational seminars and information to all property owners on proper care, pasture management, nutrition.

HCI also is concerned about how this freeze may affect premiums for the upcoming State and County Fairs. Please take a minute to let your legislator know that this funding is important to you and your children.

At the U.S. Supreme Court, HCI has joined the American Quarter Horse Association, American Association of Equine Practitioners, Palomino Horse Breeders of America, Pinto Horse Association of America and American Paint Horse Association in filing an amicus curiae, or friend of the court brief, asking the United States' highest court to reconsider a federal appeals court decision upholding an Illinois law that forced the closure of a horse processing plant in Illinois.

In explaining why the brief is being

filed, AQHA, the largest breed organization in the nation, said that, "because of their dedication to the welfare of horses of all breeds, these organizations have a strong interest in the outcome of this case and believe that some 60,000 horses have already been denied humane euthanasia because of the plant closing. While the organizations do not endorse slaughter or processing of horses, they do recognize the necessity of slaughter as a humane option for owners who do not have the means to properly care for their horses."

You may download a copy of the complete brief from the HCI website www.HorsemensCouncil.org. (Under Communications on the Home Page, go to

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President's Corner

The Voice of the Illinois Horse Industry

Wow, what a difficult spring! Mud, no Horse Fair on the nicest weekend imaginable, mud, cold windy days and then more mud. Worst of it all, what was to be the 20th annual Illinois Horse Fair passed into history as the Horse Fair that wasn't. Please be sure to read the story in this issue of the *Courier* for a glimpse at the reasons behind the cancellation. Not being able to host the Fair will cast an extreme burden on HCI's financial resources for the foreseeable future and force us to look elsewhere to raise needed funds to work for the benefit the Illinois horse industry, but with adversity comes change which can be a good thing, too. The Board of Directors is busy discussing several options to replace the lost revenue and even the possibility of creating new educational events and expos for the community.

The legislature has been busy this spring, too – thousands of bills are under review, many of which seek to make changes in your horse habits. The entire list of active equine legislation is available for review at the legislative section of the HCI website. Contact information for your legislators also can be found there. They need to hear from you, even if just to know that you live in their district and own horses.

Here are few of the most active bills and ones that we hope you will make time to contact your senator and/or representative on:

SB 1941 – Liability Protection for Riding & Driving Horses on Private Lands Amends the Recreational Use of Land and Water Areas Act. Adds entry onto the land of another, with permission, to conduct horseback riding with the rider's own horse or carriage driving to the definition of "recreational or conservation purpose."

HB4162 - Humane Transport of Horses Amends the Humane Care for Animals Act. Provides that no person may transport any

equidae in a vehicle or trailer containing two or more levels, one on top of the other. Sets out penalties for the illegal transport of equidae. (This well-meaning legislation is in danger of being high jacked by the animal rights groups.)

HB4863 - Help for Large Animal Vet Students Requires the Department of Agriculture to establish the Veterinary Loan Repayment Program to increase the number of large animal veterinarians practicing in designated veterinary resource shortage areas in the State by providing educational loan repayment assistance grants to veterinarians. (This bill needs to be amended to provide funding.)

HB5076 - Liability Protection for Providing Emergency Treatment to an Injured Animal Amends the Humane Care for Animals Act. Provides that any person, including a veterinarian, who in good faith provides emergency care or treatment without fee to an injured animal or an animal separated from its owner due to an emergency or a disaster is not liable for civil damages as a result of his or her acts or omissions in providing or arranging further care or treatment, except for willful or wanton misconduct.

HB5776 - Keeps Premise ID Voluntary Provides that the Department shall not require a premises identification number to exhibit or enter livestock or horses at any fair or exhibition in Illinois, unless required by federal law or regulation, without first receiving approval for such a requirement from the governing board of the fair or exhibition.

Drop us a note and let us know what's on your mind. After all, at HCI, we're here for you! ■

Frank Bowman

Illinois Equine Promotion Board Awards \$70,600 in Grants

More than \$70,600 in grants by the Illinois Equine Industry Research and Promotion Board have been awarded, according to Karen Freese, chair.

Grants are funded by the Illinois equine checkoff program, which provides for the voluntary assessment of a nickel per 50-pound bag of horse feed sold at retail.

The awards went to projects in seven communities from north to south across the state, including Carbondale, Cisne, Eddyville, Hillsboro, Kampsville, Manhattan and Moline.

A joint proposal from the Shawnee Trails Conservancy and the Shawnee National Forest received \$20,000 in matching funds for construction and improvement of segments of the Designated Trail System in Pope and Gallatin counties. The funds are to leverage a larger grant request from the Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The total cumulative project cost is estimated at \$400,000, according to Tim Pohlman, Shawnee National Forest Recreation Program Manager, Harrisburg, IL.

“RTP funds will be sought for 80% of the cost, the Shawnee NF will fund 15% and a 5% non-federal source is required,” Pohlman said. “The EPB grant covers this 5%,” he explained.

The Shawnee NF trail system is used by thousands of equestrians a year, making it an economic magnet for the area, according to Cindy Cain, executive director of the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau. A study in 2003 counted more than 38,000 visitors to horse campgrounds alone in the area.

Sheryl S. King, Ph.D., director of the Equine Science Program at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and researcher Karen L. Jones, Ph.D., of SIU’s Department of Animal Science, were given \$15,000 to complete the second year of a study on the effects of Omega-3 fatty acids in reducing stress in horses.

“Stress compromises physical and mental capabilities in the horse,” according to Dr. King, who notes that horses under stress fatigue faster, turn in poorer athletic performances and are more susceptible to

illness. “Dietary supplements that can reduce stress in horses without altering their normal physiology would be of great benefit to equine health and to the horse industry,” she affirms.

Francis Field Youth Foundation, Manhattan, received nearly \$10,000 toward arena updates, including materials to build 50 horse stalls in the current open-floor barn. Labor will be provided by Foundation volunteers. Francis Field is a 17-acre youth and family oriented show and recreation field in New Lenox, home to all Will County 4-H equine shows, programs and club functions. The Field hosts 10 shows during a typical season, each attracting up to 200 horses. Stall rentals are expected to increase Field revenues sufficient enough to allow additional improvements, such as a new barn roof, covered outdoor arena, lighting, electrical hookups for overnight trailer stays and opening the Field to a wider variety of uses, including therapeutic riding, according to Joe Messina, Foundation president.

Coon Creek Ridge Riders Club, Cisne, received \$12,500 for materials to improve its Summer Horse Camp site. This is a two-year project. Last year the EPB granted \$12,500 for stall construction. The new grant is to build handicapped accessible bathrooms. The majority of the construction will be done by volunteers, as was the stall construction last year, according to directors Rick Rodgers and Jacqueline Lueking. The improvements benefit 1,100 youth and adults participating in equine events at the club each year. CCRR Club also provides volunteer programs to 180 developmentally disabled individuals from 11 group homes at its facility.

New Kingdom Trailriders, Moline, which has provided therapeutic horseback riding to physically and mentally challenged children and adults since 1984, received \$6,700 for arena fencing adjacent to NKT’s new barn at Schone’s Friendship Farm in Milan. The Farm is a large boarding facility. The NKT barn and fencing will provide a sheltered area consistent with North American Riding for the Handicapped Association standards for safe operation.

University of Illinois Extension, Montgomery County Office, Hillsboro, received \$3,100 to produce a series of five

equine educational sessions: (1) Horse Ownership 101, (2) Traveling with Your Horse, (3) Around the Ranch, (4) Equine Health Management, and (5) Horse Handling and Emergency Care. Nancy Young director of Extension’s office of sponsored programs, estimates that there are nearly 6,500 horses and ponies in the Region (Montgomery, Macoupin, Sangamon, Christian, Shelby, Bond, Fayette and Madison counties) with 1,017 farms involved in the equine industry, according to the 2002 Census of Agriculture. Nearly 300 young people were enrolled in equine-related 4-H programs last year in the Region.

McCully Heritage Project (MHP) Equine Trail Improvement Project, Kampsville, was funded with a \$3,000 grant to help create maps of the trails, signage along the trails to correspond with the maps, and improve trail routing and surfacing. MHP covers 940 acres and provides 15 miles of trails free and open to the public. In 2007, MHP expanded its parking area and created a second entrance to accommodate horse trailers.

By law, EPB funds must go to support equine research, education and promotion in keeping with the enabling legislation’s core purpose: “Enhancement of the Illinois equine industry through self-funded programs, projects and activities. Grants to institutions and individuals will be related to equine research, education and industry enhancements and promotion.”

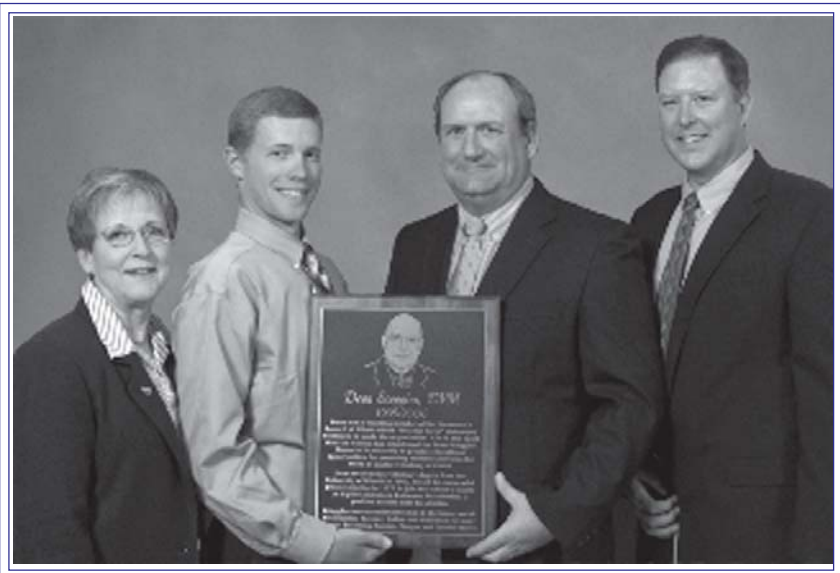
Illinois has more than 77,000 horse owners and 213,000 horses, constituting a \$3.8 billion industry and providing more than 15,000 fulltime jobs.

Any group, individual, company or institution may apply for funding. Preference will be given to projects benefiting the largest number of people/horses. ■

A detailed research application is available (as well as a shorter project application) at www.HorsemensCouncil.org or from the EPB administrative office, 3085 Stevenson Dr., Suite 308, Springfield, IL 62703, phone (217)585-1600.



The 11th annual Ruby Holmquist Memorial Scholarship went to Jenna Guthrie of New Canton, IL.



Adam Ohms of Galena, IL, receives the 2nd annual Dean Scoggins Memorial Scholarship. Making the presentation (L - R) are Dean's widow, Connie Scoggins, Adam Ohms, Dr. Jonathan Foreman, Dean of Students at the U of I College of Veterinary Medicine, and Kevin Kline, Ph.D., U of I Professor of Animal Sciences and a Horsemen's Council of Illinois director. Ohms holds the commemorative plaque, which will be hung on the college's wall of honor, recognizing Dr. Scoggins' many contributions.

HORSEMEN'S COUNCIL OF ILLINOIS Awards Two Annual Scholarships

Springfield, IL—Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI) has awarded two \$1,000 college scholarships. The 11th annual Ruby Holmquist Memorial Scholarship went to Jenna Guthrie of New Canton, IL. Adam Ohms of Galena, IL, won the 2nd annual Dean Scoggins Memorial Scholarship. Both awards are to further the students' equine education.

The Holmquist scholarship is established and administered by HCI in memory of Ruby Holmquist, dedicated horsewoman, loyal HCI director and inspiration to all who knew her. It is restricted to an Illinois resident for assisting in the pursuit of or advancement in a horse-related career.

The Scoggins award honors Dean as a life-long horseman, veterinarian and educator whose wisdom and dedication helped guide and direct HCI from its formation in 1987 through 2006 when he died. Dr. Scoggins was a champion of the species and a man who always put the horse first. The scholarship goes to an Illinois veterinary student pursuing a career as an equine vet.

Guthrie, daughter of producers Kirby and Jane Guthrie, has been a vet assistant with Ghrist Vet Clinic in Pittsfield since June 2006. She is a senior honor student at Western High School, intent upon becoming a large animal veterinarian focused on horses. She is involved with 4-H and FFA and shows horses in Western Pleasure, Hunters on the flat and over fences, and has won 1st place in 4-H Junior Horse dressage competitions the last three years.

"What I like most about having Jenna with me," says Sandra

Gilmore, DVM at Ghrist, "especially on equine calls, is her knowledge and skill with horses...she has a natural 'way' with them, so I know that when I have to do an exam, injections, or anything that may lead to bodily harm if the horse gets scared, Jenna knows exactly what to do to restrain the horse and help me do my job."

Ohms is a third-year student at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, "...someone Dr. Scoggins really would have liked for his good nature and practicality," said Dr. Jonathan Foreman, Dean of Students at the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Ohms' bachelor degree is in biology with a minor in chemistry and animal science. His equine experience and interest is in providing primary care through progressive technical services.

Applications for this year's scholarships are being accepted until December 1. Guidelines and application forms are available by writing to the Horsemen's Council of Illinois or on its web site www.HorsemensCouncil.org. HCI may be contacted at 3085 Stevenson Dr., Suite 308, Springfield, IL 62703. Phone (217) 585-1600. Fax (217) 585-1601.

The Horsemen's Council of Illinois is affiliated with the American Horse Council and is the statewide association of equine organizations and individuals working to provide centralized leadership for Illinois' 77,000 horse owners, 213,000 horses and its \$3.8 billion industry, which provides full-time employment for more than 15,000 people. ■

As the Courier goes to press ***HCI goes to Ag Director, Legislative Committee, Supreme Court speaking for the interests of Illinois horsemen***

Current Info, and click on the file AmicusBrief.pdf)

By filing the brief, the six equine associations are attempting to bring attention to the real consequences that the plant's closing has caused, such as the removal of "humane processing, which was conducted under federal standards and supervision." This "has seriously curtailed what had been a viable humane alternative to neglect and abandonment for many horse owners." The plant closure has also caused horse shelter populations to swell and led to increased reports of abandoned

and neglected horses while also increasing the transportation of horses across U.S. borders. Once outside the United States, these horses are no longer protected by federal laws.

"Our position on slaughter has been in the interest of protecting horses from abusive, neglectful situations and defending owners' rights, and even though our position has been a lightning rod of criticism, we continue to stand for what we believe to be right."

The brief cites numerous accounts of horse abandonment and seizures from

rescue facilities involving cruelty such as starvation when the burden of caring for these horses mounted. The cost to care for each horse in a rescue facility is estimated at \$2,340 per year. The filing organizations feel these accounts of neglect and abuse are in direct correlation to the closing of the U.S. processing plants. While in operation, the Illinois processing plant provided horse owners who could not or no longer wanted to keep a horse with another humane option, and one that, unlike shelters or euthanasia, was readily available.■

Illinois Equine Foundation provides a tax-free way to help HCI help horses

The Illinois Equine Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 organization, meaning that gifts and contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible.

The not-for-profit Foundation, started in 1998, was organized as a program of the Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI) to receive tax deductible contributions that provide support to the industry beyond HCI's principal mission as the voice of the Illinois horse industry.

Gifts to support the work of the Council may be received through the Foundation as monetary sums via checks or wire transfers as well as in the form of stocks, annuities, bequests from an estate, endowments, etc.

For more than a decade, HCI has used the Foundation to support the Ruby Holmquist Memorial Scholarship Fund, and more recently the Dean Scoggins Memorial Scholarship.

By charter, Foundation funds are used solely for scholarship and educational purposes. Contributors may designate their gifts, however, for general or specific uses, such as either of the current memorial scholarship programs or to expand HCI's educational efforts, including development, publication and distribution of equine related pamphlets, guides and brochures. Or contributions may be designated to support new programs, such as educational seminars on environmental, zoning, legal, best practices and business aspects of the equine industry.

With government assistance for the equine industry and university equine programs dwindling, your valued support is needed now more than ever before.

Gifts can be in any amount and for a

purpose that you specify. For example, a long-time friend of Dr. Scoggins recently provided \$10,000 to establish and support an annual scholarship in his name, providing assistance to large animal veterinary students. It's a great start, but we need your help to reach our goal for this endowment. Gifts of \$25 or more will automatically generate receipts for tax purposes.

For information on how to become a major Foundation Sponsor or sustaining member, contact the Illinois Equine Foundation, 3085 Stevenson Dr., Suite 308, Springfield, IL 62703, call the HCI office at 217-585-1600 or drop an email to hci@HorsemensCouncil.org.

Checks should be made payable to the Illinois Equine Foundation and mailed to the address above.■

Illinois Horse Fair 2008

the story behind the story of the Fair that wasn't

Headline on our news release issued Thursday evening February 21 reads, "2008 Illinois Horse Fair officially canceled."

Copy begins, "Due to concern for public safety, the Illinois Horse Fair, scheduled for Feb. 29 – Mar. 2 at the State Fairgrounds in Springfield, has been canceled."

Explanation in the next paragraph reads, "In a phone call Thursday afternoon (February 21) to Horsemen's Council of Illinois, Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke explained that public safety issues associated with high voltage electrical distribution problems at the Fairgrounds prompted the State's decision to cancel all use of the state facilities for the event."

"Until the source of our electrical problems is determined, we will continue to proceed in a manner that ensures the public's safety," Hartke said. All events scheduled through March 2 at the Fairgrounds were canceled."

It wasn't until well into March that specific problems were diagnosed and all events through May were canceled.

Current status is that the State awarded a \$1.8 million contract March 13 to B & B Electrical of Springfield to replace 22 miles of "worn out" wiring and cabling in multiple electrical distribution systems at the Fairgrounds, with a completion targeted for before Memorial Day.

The same day the State gave HCI notice of the cancellation, Illinois Horse Fair began alerting vendors, participating exhibitors and prospective attendees through email, its web sites and press releases.

Vendors and exhibitors were offered options for refunds or applying 2008 fees to the 2009 Illinois Horse Fair, March 6 - 8 at the Fairgrounds.

Thousands of dollars in advanced ticket sales were returned. Most disappointing was that these advance ticket sales were running nearly double those sold for the 2007 Horse Fair, according to Joy Meierhans, Horse Fair manager.

"We're extremely disappointed by the cancellation," Meierhans was quoted as

saying, "but the safety of more than 10,000 horsemen who annually attend our three-day all-breed expo is paramount. Sadly, there is not another location available that can accommodate the event."

"Attendees will miss their pre-season shopping this year with Horse Fair's more than 140 vendors, riders will miss opportunities to train with renowned clinicians, and more than 25 breeds and disciplines will not be able to present their distinguishing characteristics," Meierhans said, "but we'll be back next year with an even stronger program."

Craig Cameron, RFD-TV's 'Defender of the Horse,' who was to be the lead clinician, already has accepted a contract for our 2009 event. Also re-programmed into 2009 will be All-Breed Gaited Clinician Liz Graves, Richard Shrake and most of the other major presenters.

As the financial impact of the cancellation became evident, a second news release was issued. Frank Bowman, HCI president, was quoted as saying, "Not only is the association out the ticket sales and income generated by the more than 10,000 horsemen who annually attend the three-day all-breed event, but also all of the front-end marketing and promotional expenses and contract commitments to clinicians which could not be cancelled."

Front-end expenses were more than \$60,000, and projected income from participation fees and ticket sales added another \$90,000 to the loss.

This second news release explained the speed with which Horse Fair went into action to preserve good relations with its vendors, clinicians, participants and prospective attendees:

"We learned (of the cancellation) about 3 o'clock that afternoon. By that evening we had already alerted vendors and participants, most of whom have email. By Friday morning we had made phone contact with those who do not have email. And we had cancellation notices on the Horse Fair and HCI web sites by 9 a.m. Friday a week ahead of the scheduled event.

"Also Thursday night, news releases

Join Us Today!

Individual Membership Application

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

County _____

State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____

Work Phone () _____

Fax () _____

Email _____

How many horses do you own? _____

_____ at home _____ boarding stable

Individual Membership Dues (includes \$1,000,000 insurance coverage) **\$39/yr**

Organization Membership Application

Organization _____

Contact Name _____

Street _____

City _____

County _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____

Fax () _____

Email _____

Website _____

of Illinois Members in Organization _____

Check appropriate category

___ Business/Professional ___ Association ___ Charity

Organization Membership Dues: \$50/yr.

Make check payable and mail to:



Horsemen's Council of Illinois
3085 Stevenson Dr., Suite 308
Springfield, IL 62703
Phone: 217.585.1600
www.horsemenscouncil.org

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

were emailed to the equine press, horse clubs, stable owners, individuals on the HCI database and the general public media, including wire services, daily and weekly newspapers and broadcast outlets.

"We had wonderful cooperation from editors who used their web sites and email lists to pass the word, and still the phones in our office rang constantly with calls from horsemen wanting to know if it was true, that the Horse Fair was canceled, and when and where it would be rescheduled."

Bowman added that, "We immediately looked into moving Horse Fair to the Prairie Convention Center (in Springfield), the Interstate Center in Bloomington, the DuQuoin State Fairgrounds". We even looked into renting some of the large empty buildings here (Springfield), such as the vacated K-Mart and Cub Foods properties.

"Timing issues aside, the truth of the matter is that there just isn't another practical venue large enough to accommodate Horse Fair's number of horses, vendors, participants and attendees – more than 10,000."

As for re-scheduling to a new date at the Fairgrounds, the Director told us that the State was taking a week-by-week

position on when the public could safely be allowed back into the Fairgrounds, timing which eventually became "end of May" at the most hopeful.

"Besides, most of our more than 140 vendors and a dozen clinicians are booked into other horse fairs and events all year all across the nation – it just isn't practical to try to reschedule – until 2009 back at the Fairgrounds," Meierhans said.

Horsemen's Council of Illinois, which has become known as the voice of the Illinois horse industry, is affiliated with the American Horse Council but receives no financial support from the national organization. HCI is the statewide association of equine organizations and individuals working to provide centralized leadership for Illinois' 77,000 horse owners, 213,000 horses and its \$3.8 billion industry, which provides full-time employment for more than 15,000 people.

"Yes, we have financial reserves, but the plain and simple fact is that Horse Fair generates the bulk of the annual revenues HCI needs to run its legislative lobby programs, its educational outreach efforts and its administrative functions on behalf of the state's horse industry," Bowman said.

In serving as the spokesman for and guardian of horse owners' rights in the state, HCI's advocacy efforts currently include staying on top of equine health and welfare, right to ride, environmental, and tax issues in the Illinois Legislature. HCI's web site www.HorsemensCouncil.org provides information and contact areas where viewers can see how the Council is tracking legislation and status of the bills, as well as locate and contact their representatives in the General Assembly and Congress.

HCI's educational efforts include maintaining a speakers bureau staffed by people knowledgeable on all manner of subjects dealing with horse care and stabling as well as business and legal aspects of the industry. "Most of these folks volunteer their time, so this program is not endangered," Bowman said.

HCI also publishes materials on subjects such as "Buying Your First Horse," "The Basics of Horse Handling," "Responsible Horse Ownership," "Laws Affecting Horses in Illinois," "Illinois Transportation and Ownership Transfer Regulations," and "Liability Risk and Recreational Use of Land." ■

Horsemen's Council of Illinois publishes "Laws Affecting Horses in Illinois" brochure

Springfield, IL – Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI), the voice of the Illinois horse industry, has published an updated version of its respected "Laws Affecting Horses in Illinois" brochure.

Horse owners may access the brochure on the Council's web site, www.HorsemensCouncil.org, where they may download it as a PDF file or request multiple copies from the Council's administrative office.

The brochure does not give legal advice. Instead, it describes laws affecting horses in Illinois and cites Illinois Compiled Statutes and Public Acts where full language of the laws is available, making it easier for interested parties to learn the laws governing horses and horse activities. The Council recommends that legal questions should be discussed with a qualified attorney.

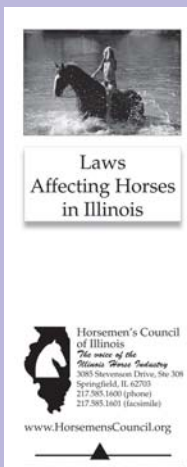
HCI also maintains a "Legislation" page on its web site where viewers can use its CapWiz™ service to locate pending bills in the General Assembly and Congress, review Council positions on such proposals as they affect horse owners, and find and contact their state and federal representatives in government.

Subjects in the brochure are far ranging – from who may be liable if a border's horse injures someone to what fencing is

needed to keep horses; from right to ride laws to use and enjoyment of rest areas; from animal registration under false pretenses to permit numbers required before horses may enter the state.

The Horsemen's Council of Illinois is the state affiliate of the American Horse Council and is the only statewide association of equine organizations and individuals providing centralized leadership for Illinois' 77,000 horse owners, 213,000 horses and its diverse \$3.8 billion industry, which provides full-time employment for more than 15,000 people.

To request the Laws Affecting Horses in Illinois brochure, go to www.HorsemensCouncil.org or contact HCI at 3085 Stevenson Dr., Suite 308, Springfield, IL 62703, phone (217) 585-1600, fax (217) 585-1601. ■



Illinois Horse Fair goes virtual

When the Illinois Department of Agriculture cancelled Illinois Horse Fair 2008 a week before it was to open, hundreds of vendors and thousands of attendees were extremely disappointed.

In an effort to bring buyers and sellers together, Horse Fair immediately began planning for a contact center on the Horse Fair web site at www.HorsemensCouncil.org. A new electronic Horse Fair newsletter already was in planning stages.

A preliminary version of the contact center went online in early March. It includes contact information, including web addresses, for the more than 140 vendors who had contracted to exhibit at the annual three-day all-breed expo.

Also included are listings for stallion owners who had committed to participating in Horse Fair's Stallion Row and Parade and owners and agents who planned to bring more than 75 horses for sale.

Some of these people also had placed ads in the 52-page official Horse Fair program, which was never printed or distributed. The program is a publication with a year-long shelf life because many of the attendees who receive the programs free at Horse Fair save them as a buying guide and directory of suppliers.

These vendors and participants, like many of the 10,000 horsemen who annually attend the event, look to Horse Fair to kick off the selling/buying/riding season. Cancellation of the Fair

especially hurt the people who booked extra inventory specifically for this event.

"In no way do we think that a listing on our web site will compensate them for their losses, but we're hoping that in some small way it will bring buyers and sellers together in a way that will help establish closer ties within the horse community," said Joy Meierhans, Horse Fair manager.

Also in the planning stage is a periodic Illinois Horse Fair electronic newsletter to be sent to anyone who signs up and provides an email address, Meierhans said. "We plan to keep Illinois horsemen informed about our new dates, clinicians, the All-Youth Horse Judging Trials, and details about projects new to Horse Fair," Meierhans said.

The newsletter will provide "stories behind the stories," such as descriptions of the Equine Life Style Fashion show that was to be introduced at the 2008 Horse Fair and intriguing new vendors such as those with horse-themed custom chocolates, hay substitutes, custom furniture made from fencing, and horse hair pottery.

Anyone interested in receiving the new Horse Fair electronic newsletter may go to the Horsemen's Council of Illinois web site www.HorsemensCouncil.org and sign up to receive it free. ■



Horse Council Courier

Horsemen's Council of Illinois, Inc.

The Voice of the Illinois Horse Industry

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Springfield, IL 62703