



Horse Council Courier

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

Horsemen's Council of Illinois HCI listens, responds to horsemen's needs

As 2007 closed, Horsemen's Council of Illinois surveyed "what's on the minds of Illinois horsemen" through a series of "summit" leadership meetings held throughout the state.

A surprise to no one really is that many of the horse community's concerns are basically the same as that of most Americans – the current economy, taxes, the environment, government restrictions and risk management (liability).

Leading economic issues include the high cost of fuel and feed, particularly hay due to its scarcity, and the low selling prices for horses. Couple these with government policies that are forcing many professionals and top amateurs to move their operations out of Illinois to more horse-friendly states.

Environmental issues also seem to be closely coupled with government regulations in areas such as restrictive zoning, compost and manure handling, and the ever increasing loss of access to public lands for equestrian pursuits, including riding, driving and camping.

While HCI cannot influence the cost of gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil, or natural gas, it is working with other groups and government agencies on creating a strategic hay reserve, seeking funding for state and local governments to house and feed unwanted and abandoned horses, and establishing hot lines for horsemen in need. HCI also is working with numerous trails organizations and site managers to improve and protect access to trails for recreation.

Similarly, HCI is working on broader issues brought about by anti-agricultural interests, which are negatively influencing the health of the equine industry in Illinois and across the nation. This includes exposing the vegan and animal rights activists whose legislative agendas have

been successful in denying horsemen humane end-of-life options for their horses. Combating government reductions in financial support for enhancing breeding and showing programs in the state as well as an apparent increase in efforts to collect sales taxes become another important function for HCI.

Many horsemen, particularly those in the southern part of the state, are reporting instances of horses being turned loose to fend for themselves on public lands and in forested areas. What's happening in these cases is that the horses are becoming "wards of the state," in the sense that various divisions of state and local government are being put into a position of caring for animals for which they have neither the funds nor facilities to provide the needed care.

On another front, HCI, through its continuing production of quality education programs, defining responsible ownership and its role in proper stewardship of our horses, is working with member organizations and others to encourage responsible breeding in an effort to return the industry to higher "minimum" pricing for all horses throughout the state.

HCI's educational efforts also address the all-too-common problem of benign neglect. Nearly 85 per cent of horses in Illinois are used for recreation and pleasure – not for showing, racing or farm work. The average annual income of many of these horse owners is less than \$50,000. Many, many of these owners are new to the industry, and HCI's position is that "we owe them all the education and support we can provide," hence the availability of publications 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."

HCI has been asked to help encourage students to become large animal veterinarians, develop a better stable management network and enhance relationships between professionals and recreational riders by addressing model business practices, full-disclosure contracts, and the adoption of policies that acknowledge and encourage acceptance of the inherent risks in dealing with large animals.

Also under development by HCI is a series of separate video seminars each dedicated to a single aspect of the industry, among them equine law, tax planning, management and insurance.

It's going to be a busy year for your association. You can help further support these efforts on behalf of the Illinois horse industry by sharing this information with your friends and recommending they join HCI today!

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President's Corner

The Voice of the Illinois Horse Industry

"The Voice of the Illinois Horse Industry" – more than just a new tag line for the HCI banner, it's a rededication of our commitment to you, HCI's members, and to bottom line success of your horse activities.

Now, more than ever before, we need to stand firm and present a unified voice for our interests and our horses. Every breed, every discipline, every activity needs to rally around the things we all have in common – a love for our horses and our chosen equestrian lifestyle.

It's a new legislative season and the animal rights and radical environmental organizations will be pacing the halls of the legislature, whining and dining your legislators to curry their favor on bills that affect your lifestyle and the enjoyment of your horses. HCI will be there, too, but we need your support. Make the time to visit with your Senator and Representative, either in Springfield or at their district office or a function near your home.

Make your passion known to them. Let them know you care, you own horses in their district and you vote. Let us at HCI know if you need help, talking points or if you would even like us to accompany you on your visit. We'll be glad to lend a hand, we're here for you.

Through the recent round of Equine Leadership Summits and a successful Winter Retreat the HCI Board of Directors examined what the industry

and HCI members value about the association. We gained a sense of what is working, emerging trends and what is crucial to horse industry success across the state. In setting future direction, the discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of the industry provides guidance for what projects to build on and what to adjust in achieving the organization's mission. It's going to be a busy year.

Premise ID is on everyone's mind this year, finding enough hay is, too. Also, please think twice before breeding that mare this spring – Make sure are you prepared both mentally and financially to deal with the responsibility for the foal - There are plenty of horses in need of homes already.

We can make this year a great year for the horse industry here in Illinois, but we'll need your help. Tell your friends and stable customers about the work HCI is doing on their behalf and ask that they join us in a show of unified support – Do it today!

Be sure to stop by and see us at the Horse Fair!

Frank Bowman

Success at Matag



Attendees at Matag included (L - R) Sara Rhoades - IL Trail Riders, Peter Veit - Horsemen's Council of Illinois, Sharon Nolan - TROD, Kathy Tranchida - TROD and Donna and Gregg Malenca - Will County Trail Riders.

Thanks to the members of six different equestrian organizations, the attendees and exhibitors at the 2007 Mid America Trails and Greenways Conference at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Chicago became acquainted with

the desire of horse people to “Share the Trail” with other users. Members from the Horsemen’s Council of Illinois, Illinois Trail Riders, Will County Trail Riders, Palos Hills Equestrian Association, Trail Riders of DuPage, and Horse Promoters, Inc. were all present in the exhibit hall and at the concurrent sessions to be sure that the equestrian presence was felt and appreciated. Special thanks go to the Horsemen’s Council of Illinois for the use of their beautiful display booth. It was one of the most professional display booths in the Exhibit Hall and attracted many visitors.

Eight states were represented at the Conference: Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The Conference was opened by Illinois Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, who is aware of the benefits of trails and greenways to communities and individuals. The “No Child Left Inside” movement has been furthered by the diagnosis

of Nature Deficit Disorder which, in turn, has given more importance to trails and greenways issues in many communities.

Following Lt. Governor Quinn’s speech, representatives of the eight states gave the State of the State report on the conditions of the trails and greenways programs in their state. The concurrent sessions were then divided into Urban, Suburban, and Rural areas and addressed the topics of: 1) Challenges and Opportunities, 2) Nuts, Bolts, Funding, Design, Construction, Operation, and Maintenance, 3) Building Active and Healthy Communities with Trails and Greenways,

The bottom line for Illinois Trail Riders at this multi-state conference was that equestrian trail users were visible and were heard as trail users who should have equal importance with other trail users.

Need Hay?

HCI, in anticipation of continued or worsening drought conditions across the Midwest, is exploring ways to link producers who have hay to sell with Illinois horsemen in need.

The following links may be helpful in your search:

Illinois Hay Directory: <http://www.agr.state.il.us/markets/hay/> – online directory of hay for sale in Illinois from the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

National Hay Association: <http://www.nationalhay.org/Index.html> – publishes a directory of hay producers many of whom are in Illinois and surrounding states.

Internet Hay Exchange: <http://www.hayexchange.com/> – state by state listing of hay for sale, an online hay auction and transportation services.

The Hay Barn: <http://www.haybarn.com/main/index.asp> – classified ad site for hay, hay equipment, and haying services.

Illinois Hay Reports: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsmnpubs/HayIL.htm> – USDA’s weekly hay reports on hay prices and availability at Illinois hay auctions.

While hay is in short supply, horsemen may wish to consider alternative feedstuffs.

Kevin Kline, PhD, professor of animal sciences at the University of Illinois and an HCI director, has authored an article on “Alternative Feeds for Horses during Hay Shortages.” It’s available on the Internet at <http://www.livestocktrail.uiuc.edu/horsenet/paperDisplay.cfm?ContentID=9837>

Horse Fair exhibitors, including Organ Farms, McLeansboro, IL, are offering alternative feeds, including a product called Chaffhaye, which is described as “premium cut Alfalfa cut, high moisture content, sprayed with a light coating of low sugar content molasses with a little probiotics to start the fermentation process. It is immediately put in 50# bags with enough air to process). The bag is sealed so that the process stops when the oxygen is used up. The Chaffhaye will stay in that state until the bag is opened to use. The neat thing about this product is that: Easy storage - can sit outside for up to two years and be fine unless it is opened. Dust free, Mold Free, Certified weed free. Highly digestible (up to 65-70 TDN). Highly palatable. Less waste, less manure. Cost effective – one 50# bag is basically equal to 100# of like hay.”

The website for information is www.chaffhay.com.

First Responder horse training pays off

Everyone was appalled by the horrific accident last October 27th when a double-decker semi carrying some 59 horses from Indiana to the Canadian/Minnesota border overturned. Amidst the tragedy and suffering, there was one positive aspect. A great number of horse knowledgeable volunteers came to the rescue. These included six veterinarians, members of the Lake County posse, staff from Temple Farms, local horse owners, and of course the first responders, i.e. fire and police department personnel. Earlier this year, Chief Kirschoffer of the Newport Fire Department (the man in charge of extracting the horses), and five of the firemen had received Equine Rescue Training conducted by the Trail Riders of DuPage (TROD), part of a program being expanded statewide under HCI auspices.

This program provides hands-on training for policemen, firemen, park rangers and others who might respond to horse accidents. While this program is not intended to turn them into horsemen, it has provided familiarity and confidence in handling and leading such large and panicked animals.

Several people present commented on the fact that it was a real blessing that so many of the rescuers knew what they were doing with the horses.

Illinois Horse Fair Offers Shopping, Education, Fun for All

Top national clinicians and equine educators join vendors offering “everything equestrian” for recreational horsemen as well as professionals in all breeds and disciplines at the 20th annual Illinois Horse Fair February 29 – March 2, 2008 at the state fairgrounds in Springfield.

Produced by Horsemen’s Council of Illinois (HCI) and presented by Purina Mills, Midway Trailer Sales and John Deere, the all-breed expo annually attracts more than 10,000 horsemen.

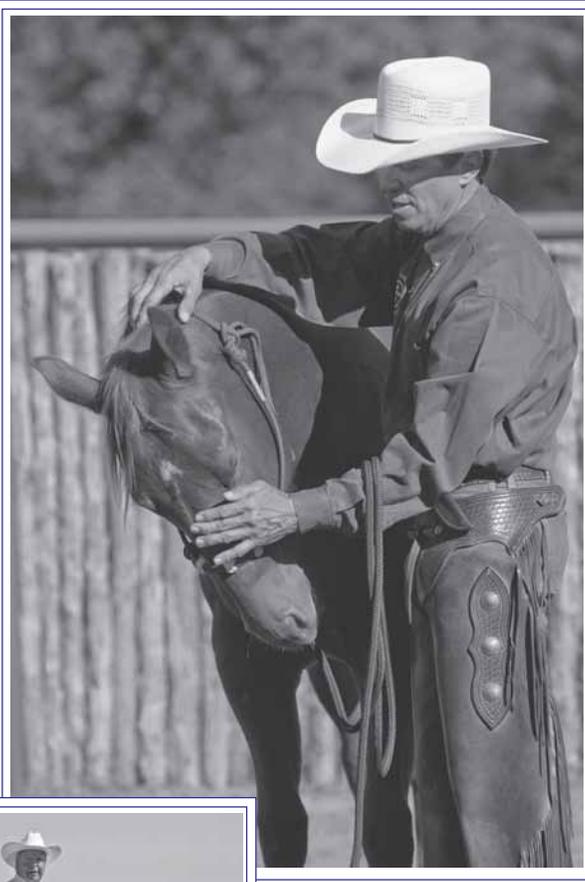
“Horse Fair always brings fresh headliners – clinicians, trainers, instructors – with relevant topics useful to all levels of horsemen,” says Joy Meierhans, Fair manager. “But Horse Fair also offers the ‘new and different’ in equestrian-related events.”

New this year are Midway’s free hands-on trailer safety and driving school, an equestrian lifestyle fashion show, high-level dressage demonstrations by Lilo Fore and Cowboy Church at 8 a.m. Sunday.

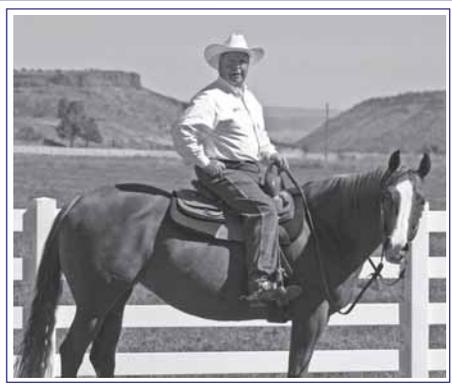
In addition to a strong pre-season retail environment (140 commercial vendors, 100 trailers for sale on site) and informational opportunities, Horse Fair offers unique HorsesForSale aisles, more than 25 breed and sport demonstrations, Stallion Row and Parade and the All-Youth Horse Judging Trials.

Headline clinician is RFD-TV’s Craig Cameron of Bluff Dale, TX, often called the public defender of the horse. Joining Cameron is the ultimate coach, Richard Shrake of Sun River, OR.

Riding clinics will be presented by Jon Barry of Advance, MO (Western Pleasure), a National Saffle Bit Association Hall of famer; Matt Florida of Lexington, KY (Reining), a second generation National Reining Horse Association champion; Donna Irvin of Kewanee, IL (Barrel Racing), AQHA World Show Qualifier and All American Quarter Horse Congress Top 10 three times; Liz Graves of Spring Valley, MN



ABOVE: RFD-TV’s Craig Cameron, often called the defender of the horse, headlines Illinois Horse Fair, Feb. 29 - Mar. 2 at the fairgrounds in Springfield.



LEFT: Richard Shrake a Great Teacher and Communicator...the Ultimate Coach

(Gaited), who many consider to be the premier all-breed gaited clinician; and Rob Byers of Simpsonville, KY (Saddle Seat Equitation), a Triple Crown trainer who has coached numerous champion riders on Saddlebred, Arabian and National Show Horses, and trained World Champion horses in every division of saddle horses and ponies.

Others giving training demonstrations include Ryan Gingerich, Mark Schwarm and Tim Boyer.

A regular on RFD-TV, Cameron will do two training sessions each on Saturday and Sunday in the Coliseum. Saturday morning is “Putting a handle on your horse,” and

Saturday afternoon is “Evaluating a horse physically, mentally and emotionally.” Sunday morning is “What NOT to do with your horse,” and Sunday afternoon is “Creative new methods and patterns to gentle and finish a horse.” His Friday sessions in the Livestock Center are “How to read your horse,” “Handling feet and legs,” and “Curing the horse that crowds.”

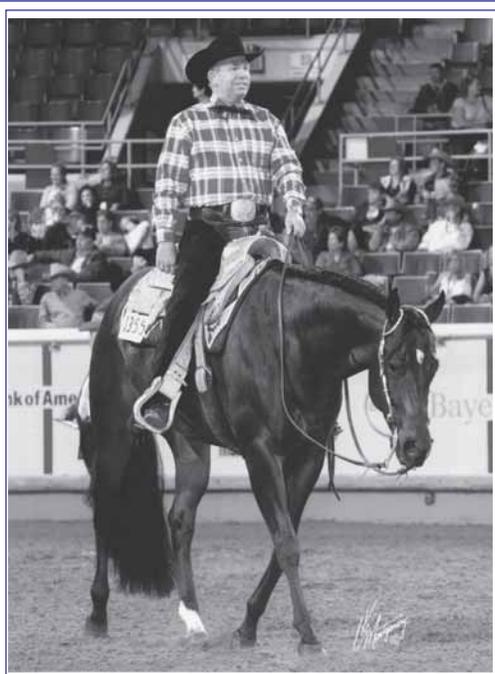
While general admission tickets permit entry to all Horse Fair venues, preferred seating immediately surrounding Cameron’s morning round pen sessions in the Coliseum arena also are available. This close-up seating allows Cameron to integrate audience questions into his presentations, making them highly personal.

A complete schedule of events, as well as contacts for all riding clinic coordinators, is printable from the Internet at www.HorseMensCouncil.org

Exhibits fill the Livestock Center, Annex, Building 26 just north of the Livestock Center, and barns radiating east from the Livestock Center and across the street in the Series 25 barns. Most of this is heated indoor space, but some equipment displays and trailers are parked outside adjacent to these venues.

More than 300 young people are involved in the All-Youth Horse Judging Trials under HCI sponsorship in cooperation with U. of I. Extension. Teams come from the ranks of 4-H, FFA and breed associations around Illinois surrounding states. Unusual in these trials is that in most other locations where they are held, these junior judges often are presented only with traditional halter and performance classes from stock horse breeds. At Horse Fair, they may be asked to judge the unusual (Bashkir Curlies, Norwegian Fjords) or any one of more than 25 breeds on the grounds.

What’s unusual about the HorsesForSale Aisles at Horse Fair is that horses are neither auctioned nor sold by Horse Fair. All dealings are direct between buyer and seller. When prospective buyers come onto the grounds, they receive a listing of horses for sale, which includes a description of the horse along with a tag number that appears on the horse’s halter



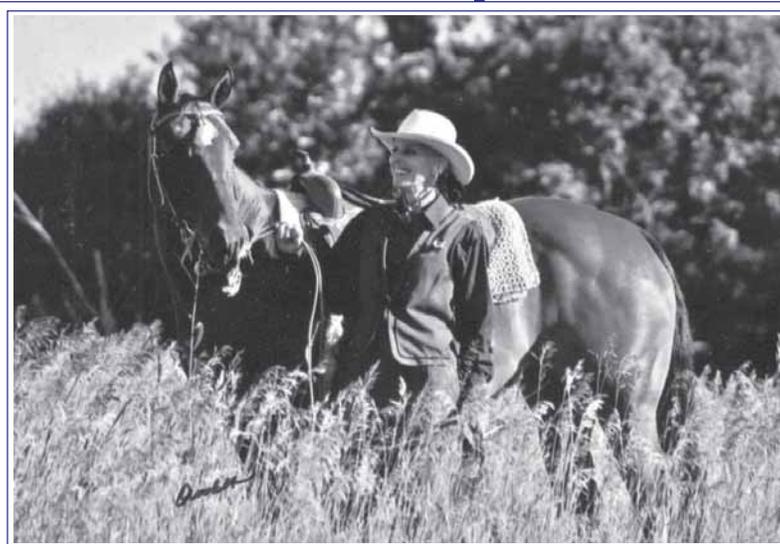
ABOVE:
NSBA Hall of Famer
and AQHA Judge
Jon Barry hosts
Western Pleasure Clinic



RIGHT:
"Triple Crown" Trainer
Rob Byers hosts Saddle
Seat Equitation Clinic
Photo courtesy of
Avis Photo



LEFT:
Proven Competitor and Teacher
Donna Irvin hosts
Barrel Racing Clinic



BELOW:
Nationally Acclaimed Gaited
Riding Expert Liz Graves hosts
All-Breed Gaited Clinic



and stall. To enter a horse in the HorsesForSale Aisles, contact Myles Harston, HFS coordinator, at (309) 208-5230 or email mh@aquaranch.com.

Horse Fair opens on Friday when early bird shoppers get access to vendors' full stock of merchandise plus save money on special Friday-only promotions and reduced \$5 admission charge...and see training demo sessions by Craig Cameron, Richard Shrake and others.

Saturday or Sunday tickets are \$12 adults and \$6 child/senior; weekend passes are \$20 adults and \$10 child/senior. Advance tickets may be purchased online with a charge card at www.HorsemensCouncil.org. Just click on the Horse Fair icon and locate "tickets" in the index.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of

responsibilities, ranging from manning information booths to hospitality. You can volunteer for a few hours a day or for a whole weekend. To volunteer, contact Cheryl DeMent by email at paintfilly71@yahoo.com.

For information on exhibiting visit www.HorsemensCouncil.org, or contact: Commercial space: Joy Meierhans, Horse Fair Manager, (630) 557-2575, email JM@TheMeierhans.com. Breed demos: Kat and Brent Hamer (309) 432-3539, email fizz61760@yahoo.com. Stallions: Lori Nelson (217) 623-5561, email

lorinelsontraining@gmail.com. HorsesForSale: Myles Harston (309) 208-5230, email mh@aquaranch.com

Those interested in having a horse considered for the many training demos by Horse Fair clinicians should contact Carrol Rodgers, horse procurement coordinator, at (618)838-4396 or email carrolr@hotmail.com

Illinois Horse Fair is produced by Horsemen's Council of Illinois, an affiliate chapter of the American Horse Council. HCI is the statewide "organization of organizations" and individuals providing central leadership and advocacy for Illinois' 77,000 horse owners, 213,000 horses and its diverse \$3.8 billion equine industry.

Premises ID Requirement Adopted for Illinois Fairs

New rule applies to all livestock exhibitors and takes effect this year

A premises identification number will be required to exhibit livestock at state, county, 4-H and FFA fairs beginning in 2008, the Illinois Department of Agriculture announced. **No NAIS Premises ID is required to participate in the Illinois Horse Fair.**

Premises registration is the first step toward the establishment of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and will greatly improve the ability of Illinois animal health professionals to contain disease outbreaks.

"Knowing the location of each and every livestock operation in the state would enable us to quickly trace the movement of infected animals, impose quarantines and, perhaps, prevent the disease from spreading to neighboring farms if an outbreak were to occur," Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke said. "The information is absolutely critical to our disease-fighting capabilities, especially at events like fairs where large numbers of animals are confined for short periods of time and then moved.

Nearly 9,000 Illinois livestock operations already have enrolled in the NAIS, 30 percent of the state's premises.

"That figure exceeds the USDA's 2007 target of 25 percent, but full participation will be needed if the system is to achieve its goal of identifying all animals and premises that have been exposed to a disease within 48 hours of its discovery," Dr. Colleen O'Keefe, division manager of Food Safety and Animal Protection, said.

Registration is free and easy. The entire process, which consists of a short

questionnaire that asks for a facility's name, address, phone number and the types of livestock it raises, takes about ten minutes to complete. The application form is posted on the Illinois Department of Agriculture's website at www.agr.state.il.us/premiseid.

Producers who register online will receive a premises ID number immediately. The application also can be completed and returned by mail, but may take four weeks to process. To obtain a copy of the form, producers should call 1-866-299-9256.

Because the identification number corresponds to the location where an animal is raised, it does not necessarily have to be issued in the exhibitor's name. The number must be obtained and included on entry forms, however, before fairs will allow an animal to compete.

The premises ID requirement also applies to horses. Owners of horses stabled in Illinois and planning to race or exhibit at either a state or county fair can register online just like Illinois livestock producers can. Owners of out-of-state horses must obtain a premises ID number through their state's agriculture department, whose contact information can be found online at http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/premises_id/register.shtml.

HCI will host a "Pros & Cons" Public Forum on premises ID at 3:45 pm Sunday, March 2nd, in the Seminar Hall at the Illinois Horse Fair

OVETS Article Corrections

There were several mistakes in the OVETS article that was published in the Fall 2007 issue of Horse Council Courier. Apologies to Brian Bourne, Trails Specialist with the US Forest Service at the Shawnee National Forest; Candace Bourne, Trails for the Future, Inc.; the Indiana Horse Council, Hoosier Back Country Horsemen, and the steering committee of the 2007 OVETS. The following phrases should be replaced by their respective italicized corrections:

Paragraph 1 – "hosted by the Indiana Trail Riders Association" should read *hosted by the Indiana Horse Council*.

Paragraph 2 – "Indiana Trail Riders Association" and "ITRA" should both read *Hoosier Back Country Horsemen*.

Paragraph 7 – "representing Brian Bourne from Trails for the Future, Inc., a group that has been hired to design the designated trails" should read *Brian Bourne, USFS Trails Specialist at the Shawnee National Forest*.

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
 P. O. Box 1605
 Springfield, IL 62705
 Phone: 217.585.1600
www.horsemenscouncil.org

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Five Named to Illinois Equine Promotion Board

Five new members have been appointed to the Illinois Equine Industry Research & Promotion Board (EPB), according to Lois A. Guyon, chair.

The Equine Promotion Board is the governing body of the equine checkoff program in Illinois, which distributes research and education grants from funds generated through voluntary assessments of a nickel per 50-pound bag of horse feed.

Britt L. Douglas, D.V.M., of Salem, was named to fill the term of Dr. Dean Scoggins, deceased.

Members appointed to fill terms of board members whose terms expired the end of 2007 are Lea Ann Koch Bingham, Oswego; Karen Freese, Hammond; Don W. Shepherd, PhD, Kirkland; and Max L. Webel, M.D., Baylis.

By law, the Equine Promotion Board must be composed of 11 members representing the industry both geographically and demographically, plus a representative of the feed and grain industry.

Douglas received her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from the University of Illinois in 2002 and has operated her own practice in Salem since 2005, devoting time to equine reproduction, including stallion fertility evaluation, collection and shipment and mare fertility. Her hobbies include horseback training and riding.

Bingham grew up with horses, her father being an equine vet, and her father-in-law, Richard Bingham, being a former president of the American Quarter Horse Association. Lea Ann herself has been president of the Illinois Quarter Horse Association and has served on numerous other equine association boards. She represents show horses in northern Illinois.

Freese has a bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of Illinois and nearly 14 years experience in agribusiness with the Archer Daniels Midland Company, initially in research, but for the last several years in sales/marketing and brand management. Several years ago she gave up full-time employment with ADM to devote time to her family. She now works part-time for ADM as a communications specialist in the Research Division.

Karen grew up with horses in the "backyard" and now owns and operates Lamplight Farm and Stables in Hammond, offering boarding, training and lesson programs. Karen is a member of the Appaloosa Horse Club and actively competes in local shows, competitive trail riding and mounted orienteering. She represents pleasure horses in central Illinois.

Shepherd is a retired college professor who now operates Shepherd's Carriage Livery (registered Belgian draft horses) and whose property was the Illinois State 2007 Sustainable Ag Farm of the Year. Shepherd also teaches driving – single and team – at the farm. He represents working horses in northern Illinois.

Webel is a recently retired physician who has served as a facility medical director, staff physician at Carbondale Clinic and instructor at SIU School of Medicine while gathering many awards. He has 20 year's experience breeding and raising American Saddlebred horses, including World Champions in Three-Gaited and Pleasure divisions. His main interests are genetics and nutrition. He represents show horses and breeders in central Illinois.

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.

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."

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.

*A podcast
just for you ...
the equine enthusiast*



On-air personality Trent Loos



Horse Tales

Horse Tales - a free audio podcast about everything equine - is hosted by on-air personality Trent Loos, an ag advocate who has been allied with a number of HCI legislative initiatives.

Each week on *Horse Tales*, Trent explores an array of equine-related activities/events and talks with individuals who work with horses or in the equine industry in a variety of ways.

If you'd like to receive *Horse Tales* through your favorite podcast software or via your computer, you can subscribe at www.feedstuffs.com. Click on the Loos Tales link. Or through iTunes ... just search the podcast section of the iTunes store for *Horse Tales* and click on subscribe.

Who is responsible for unwanted horses? WE ARE.

These are words from a new brochure available from the Unwanted Horse Coalition, which includes the Horsemen's Council of Illinois through its affiliation with the American Horse Council and the AHC State Horse Council Committee.

"We all want to think that U.S. horse organizations and individual horse owners and breeders are mindful of their responsibilities to breed, use and care for their horses, whether involved in racing, showing or recreation," the copy goes on.

"Nonetheless, some in the horse industry may be unaware that tens of thousands of horses end their days unwanted, unneeded or unusable. These are the so-called 'unwanted horses.'" Drought, high hay prices, foreclosures, the economy and government policy are serving to make the problem worse.

Goals of the Unwanted Horse Coalition are to help by:

- Educating current and future horse owners on how to own responsibly, proper care and breeding, and options available before a horse becomes unwanted
- Raising awareness of the issue and its consequences to horses and the horse industry
- Reducing the number of unwanted horses and working toward elimination of the problem
- Ensuring that horses are treated humanely and with dignity

- Facilitating the exchange of information on adoption, care and alternative careers
- Providing information on end-of-life decisions, including veterinary decisions, euthanasia and disposal
- Explaining the issue through presentations at industry gatherings, such as symposiums and horse fairs

Working to help implement Coalition goals, HCI's education program encourages those thinking about becoming horse owners to learn the responsibilities that go with horse ownership, including proper feeding, veterinary care, training and the options for responsible end-of-life decisions.

The Coalition also makes available a handbook, addressing these varied issues. It's available as a download from the web site www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org.

HCI in Illinois and the coalition in Washington continue to work to preserve horse owner' rights in dealing with unwanted horses by fighting legislation which would deny these rights. While HCI has never "supported" horse slaughter, the HCI Board of Directors and every responsible horse owner in the state, indeed the nation, recognizes that it is unwise to legislate prohibitions against it until there are funded alternatives in place to deal with the sheer magnitude of unwanted horses that such a prohibition will bring about.



Horse Council Courier
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