

Talking Points

Making Plans


Racing Commissioners International has announced an ambitious three-year program for that organization built around creation of a new state regulatory structure, the National Racing and Wagering Commission. RCI will serve as a resource for commissions and others seeking uniformity in regulation, standardization, common safety standards, simplified licensing, economies of scale, and elimination of redundancies.

Chain of Custody

A new chemical test developed in Pennsylvania is likely to tighten the oft-disputed chain of custody in movement of blood and urine samples. The test, called 24-plex STR (for "short tandem repeats"), utilizes pieces of genetic material which are amplified and analyzed to confirm or exclude a single blood or urine sample being from the host horse tested. It was developed after work with 171 Standardbreds and 90 Thoroughbreds, with the chance of extremely few false identifications.

Greater Transparency

The Racing Medication and Testing Consortium has announced the formation of a database on drug-related rulings, with public revelation of the offenses, and explanations of what they mean, on its website. RMTTC Executive Director Dr. Scot Waterman said it is the only database in existence that allows viewers to see not only the infractions, but also a description of the possible uses and effects of the drug in the horse.

 What do you think about any of these issues? Let us know at our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/hofbeatsmagazine, and we will run your answers in next month's *Hoof Beats*.

NJ Horsemen Plan Grassroots Campaign

Mike Gulotta, co-owner of New Jersey's Deo Volente Farm and the lone horse-racing representative on Gov. Chris Christie's transition team, has initiated a grassroots effort to try to convince Garden State decision makers of the need to establish VLTs at racetracks.

Gulotta said the campaign will consist of three phases:

- An organized effort to blanket New Jersey newspapers with letters to the editor touting the benefits of VLTs at racetracks as a way to alleviate the state's budget woes. Campaign workers will put together notes and talking points for writers to use when submitting their letters.

- Place calls to NJ 101.5 FM's radio show, "Ask the Governor," which is held on the first Wednesday of each month. Volunteers will call into the

show and ask the governor about the budget crisis and whether VLTs at tracks might help alleviate the problem. Additionally, volunteers would continuously call into the station and raise awareness about the benefits of slots at tracks.

- A rally in Trenton, the state's capital.

VLTs have been blocked at racetracks by state lawmakers sympathetic to casino interests in Atlantic City, according to Tom Luchento, president of the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey. He said that state tax revenues from

Atlantic City casinos, which are taxed at an 8-percent rate, have been in decline as those same companies have built casinos in neighboring states such as Pennsylvania and New York.

Gulotta asked that those interested in helping to send letters, make phone calls or volunteer in other ways contact Scott Fellin at srfellin@yahoo.com, and include your name, city/state, phone number and e-mail address. He specifically asked for more help from horse owners, or those who have a significant financial stake in the state of New Jersey racing.

