

PTHA ANNOUNCES PENSION PLAN FOR PHILADELPHIA PARK TRAINERS

Recently, I was able to announce to the general membership the details of the new pension plan for trainers based at Philadelphia Park. This new plan is made possible through Act 71, which is also known as the Racehorse Development and Gaming Act which was passed in 2004. Aside from slot machine revenue vastly increasing our purses, the Act also requires 4% of the revenue that is earmarked for horseracing to be set aside for health care and pensions for the horsemen.

I am proud to say that after a year and a half of research and due diligence, we have come up with a plan that will give our horsemen who race and support our program at Philadelphia Park a pension that is as good as any in the country. Because the PTHA and the trainers do not have a typical employer-employee relationship, the program is considered a 'case of first instance' pension, totally new and created by combining the best parts of other pension plans.

There are three types of eligibility requirements in order for a trainer to qualify:

- 1) Trainers who have a minimum of 20 starts at Philadelphia Park, with at least 2/3 of their total starts at Philadelphia, and are stabled at Philadelphia Park;
- 2) Trainers who occupy an entire barn;
- 3) Trainers who are stabled at Philadelphia Park and have at least 150 starts at Philadelphia Park.

A designated amount of money per start (\$30/start for 2009) will be contributed on a yearly basis.

We have also instated a "senior bonus catch-up plan" that would help those born in 1954 or earlier and would add \$1,000 into the pension fund for every year of eligibility retroactive until 1975. The average age of our trainers is 53 and we appreciate that these men and women have supported us in the lean years. It is important that the PTHA wants to make sure something is given back to our senior people who have supported Philadelphia Park during its "lean" years.

BACKSTRETCH RENOVATION PROJECT MOVES AHEAD WITH ADDED FEATURES

Those of you who have horses here at Philadelphia Park or who have shipped in to race here may be wondering why all of a sudden, the progress in the barn area, particularly the barn renovation, has seemingly come to a halt after the first four barns have been built and are filled.

In late Fall, new plans were drawn up by track management, with our input, to comply with new rules for barn water runoff. Accordingly, the remaining old barns will now be entirely rebuilt, including new stalls, and all will feature three wash stalls inside on the street end. Horsemen, then, will no longer be allowed to bathe horses outside the barns on the pavement, where the manure and water can run into streams. The new drainage in the wash stalls will empty into the Bensalem sewer system.

Along with the new barns, new four-sided manure containers for removal of straw and shavings will replace the old three-sided cement pits, and at that time, we hope to better police the barn area, fining trainers, if we must, who do not dispose of dirty bedding properly. We are sure these extra efforts, along with the new barns and eventual repaving of the roads and area between the barns will go far in making the Philadelphia Park backstretch an area in which we can all be proud. It has been a long time coming, and I want to assure all horsemen that Philadelphia Park management is planning on restarting barn construction in early Spring.

GRANDSTAND RETURNS TO HORSEMEN

On Sunday, December 13, the removal of 3,000 slot machines from the Philadelphia Park first and third floors to *parx*, the new casino, was the first step towards returning the grandstand to the horsemen. Between now and Kentucky Derby 2010, changes will be made to create a better-than-ever area for trainers, owners and fans alike.

The new plans that I reviewed with COO Joe Wilson a few weeks ago convinced me that racing is still a very important part of the “destination place” plan that Greenwood has for the track and new casino. The new first floor will once again have a sit-down eating area with waitress service near the paddock, and the whole new look will be modern and clean. Some “face-lifting” will also be made to the fifth floor and the dining and seating area where many of our owners and trainers spend the afternoon.

GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION FOR TABLE GAMES

Thursday, January 7, Governor Ed Rendell signed the 2009-2010 state budget for Pennsylvania, which included legislation for approval of table games. Hopefully, this will be an added benefit to our racing program at Philadelphia Park.