

AHC Issues Forum to Highlight Welfare of Horse

February 3, 2009

The American Horse Council has announced that the focus of this year's National Issues Forum will be the "Welfare of the Horse." The Forum will be held June 16, 2009 in Washington, DC as part of the AHC's annual meeting.

Over the last year, concerns about the welfare of horses used in racing, showing, recreation, or work have been raised by our fans, the general public, the media, and Congress. Such concerns have been expressed before, but perhaps not as broadly as now. "Those involved in the horse industry day-to-day know that the horse community has long recognized its responsibilities for the safety, welfare, and stewardship of its horses," noted AHC president Jay Hickey. "Unfortunately, those who are not so involved are often not as aware of our many welfare and safety requirements and efforts."

Equine organizations have been concerned about welfare and safety for many years; some have recently undertaken new initiatives and studies in this area. The welfare, safety, and stewardship of the horse are the guiding principles for all segments of the horse industry. Nonetheless the public, media, and federal and state officials are often not aware of the extent of what the horse industry is doing, and has done, with respect to the care of its horses. It is up to the horse industry to ensure that our activities and efforts are understood by all.

The horse industry is a broad and diverse community. Each segment has its own rules, regulations and welfare activities. Sometimes one segment is not aware of what other segments are doing. "The AHC hopes that focusing on the 'Welfare of the Horse' at its National Issues Forum will be an opportunity to discuss the common goal of being good stewards of the horse and facilitate our all working together to that end, regardless of our varied activities," said Hickey.

The Forum will be a discussion of the welfare and safety requirements that various segments of the horse industry have in place or are proposing. It will allow the sharing of rules, studies, knowledge and ideas so that various segments of the horse community are aware of the activities of other segments. "By doing this, we hope to provide not only an opportunity to educate ourselves, but also an opportunity to educate the public, media, and federal and state officials about how important the welfare and safety of the horse is to the industry," said Hickey.