

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **KENTUCKY HORSE PARK UNVEILS NEW PARTNERSHIP TO ASSIST INJURED AND UNWANTED HORSES**

LEXINGTON, KY (October 23, 2009) The Kentucky Horse Park and the Kentucky Equine Humane Center are partnering in a new project to assist Kentucky's unwanted horses.

Last week the Kentucky Horse Park became aware that some unwanted, pregnant Thoroughbred mares were in need of a home. The owner of the mares no longer wanted them, and sent them to the Kentucky Equine Humane Center (KyEHC), a 72-acre facility located in central Kentucky. The KyEHC is a model shelter for equines from across the state. No horse in need of shelter is ever turned away, regardless of breed or mix of breed. The number of horses they have taken in has swelled recently, including the pregnant mares, so they contacted the Kentucky Horse Park for assistance.

"We are ever mindful of the responsibilities that march in tandem with the privileges of being the Horse Capital of the World," stated John Nicholson, Executive Director of the Kentucky Horse Park. "So we had to make an important decision. The easy choice would have been to make excuses not to get involved, or to look the other way and hope that someone else would help these mares. The more difficult choice would entail taking on several new, high-maintenance horses, thus significantly increasing the work load for our already-overworked staff." He continued, "We made the right decision."

Kathy Hopkins, Equine Director for the Kentucky Horse Park, visited KyEHC with several staff members to make arrangements to take some of the pregnant mares. "While we were there, we saw a number of horses of other breeds that we thought we could help," stated Hopkins. "So we formed a partnership that will allow some of their horses to come to the park each year for foster care, to receive rehabilitation and training, which will also ease the overcrowded situation at their shelter a bit."

Lori Neagle, Executive Director of KyEHC observed, "Horses that have training are much more adoptable. This partnership will allow the horses to be more useful, and therefore, find homes easier, allowing KyEHC to place more horses into adoptive homes. Not only will these horses be easier to adopt, but when properly trained, horses continue to be more marketable throughout their lifetime, reducing their risk of ending up in a crisis situation. This helps the horse long term as well as KyEHC by not having the horse return to us later in life."

Care for the horses will be provided by park staff and by students enrolled in the park's new four-month *Professional Horseman's Course* which starts in January.

In the *Professional Horseman's Course*, students will have the rare opportunity to study and work with up to 40 breeds of horses at the park and gain hands-on knowledge and experience regarding handling, feeding, grooming, foal-watching, rehabilitation of injured horses, and training techniques utilized in today's equine industry. The goal of the program is to provide information and skills necessary for the graduates to enter many facets of the horse business.

Through the partnership with KyEHC, students will have the opportunity to truly make a difference in the lives of horses who, due to no fault of their own, have found themselves in need of new homes. The students will also assist in the subsequent adoption process.

Nicholson concluded, "This might be a perfect example of 'what goes around comes around'. As we step up to the plate to help these horses, the horses will, in turn, help our students to become more qualified and conscientious caretakers, who will accordingly discover ways to make their own valuable contributions to the horse industry."

For more information on the new partnership or the Kentucky Horse Park's *Professional Horseman's Course*, contact Laurie Brown at 859-259-4290 or [lbrown@kyhorsepark.com](mailto:lbrown@kyhorsepark.com), or Ellen Hamilton at 859-321-6982 or [ehamilton@kyhorsepark.com](mailto:ehamilton@kyhorsepark.com). For information on the Kentucky Equine Humane Center, go to [www.KyEHC.org](http://www.KyEHC.org) or contact Lori Neagle at 859-881-5849 or [LNeagle@KyEHC.org](mailto:LNeagle@KyEHC.org).

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The photo above is of Junebug, an Appaloosa who is among the horses coming from KyEHC to the Kentucky Horse Park. A high-res version of this photo is available for use by the media with this release by emailing [Cindy.Rullman@ky.gov](mailto:Cindy.Rullman@ky.gov).

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The Kentucky Horse Park is a working horse farm/theme park and equine competition facility dedicated to man's relationship with the horse. The park is an agency of the Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet that hosted nearly 900,000 visitors and campers, as well as 15,000 competition horses in more than 100 special events and horse shows in 2008. The park is home to the National Horse Center which comprises more than 30 national and regional equine organizations. Located at Exit 120, Interstate 75, just north of Lexington, the Kentucky Horse Park is The place to get close to horses. Open daily March 15 to October 31, and Wednesday through Sunday, November 1 to March 14.

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