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CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD



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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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SUMMARY OF CHRB ACTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS 12-14-17

LOS ALAMITOS, CA – The California Horse Racing Board conducted its regular meeting Thursday, December 14, at Los Alamitos Race Course. Chairman Chuck Winner presided. Vice Chairman Madeline Auerbach and Commissioners Jesse Choper, Fred Maas, Araceli Ruano and Alex Solis also were in attendance.

The audio of this entire Board meeting is available on the CHRB Website (www.chrb.ca.gov) under the [Webcast](#) link. In brief:

- Chairman Winner began the meeting by honoring the equine and human victims of the December 7 fire at San Luis Rey (SLR) training center and all those who rushed to their aid and later contributed to relief efforts. Vice Chairman Auerbach elaborated on the generosity of thousands who donated cash, services and supplies in the aftermath of the tragedy, and she was followed by Alan Balch, executive director of the California Thoroughbred Trainers; Cliff Goodrich, executive director of the California Thoroughbred Horsemen's Foundation; and Tim Ritvo, chief operating officer of The Stronach Group, which owns SLR and Santa Anita Park. Among their key points:

Chairman Winner said we witnessed both the horror of what happened at San Luis Rey and the overwhelming response. He honored those who risked their lives to save horses, specifically Martine Bellocq, Joe Herrick and Les Baker, who were injured in the process. "So many heroes who worked at the racetrack, instead of caring for their own lives, their own safety, leapt to try to save those wonderful animals that we all care so much about."

Vice Chairman Auerbach, acknowledging \$650,000 in cash donations from thousands of contributors through a GoFundMe account sponsored by the Stronach Group and the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, said the money is being handled by a committee of people that "we feel is in the best possible position not only to be aware of the problems but to handle (the money) appropriately," including Nate Newby, vice president of marketing at Santa Anita; Rick Hammerle, Vice President of Racing at Santa Anita; David Jerkens, racing secretary at Del Mar, Balch, and herself. "Our main objective and the objective of the people who gave this

money is to get it into the hands of the people who need it the most (including) every single groom who worked at San Luis Rey.”

Balch, noting the CTT is responsible for the health and welfare of everyone in the backstretch community, said there are “dozens if not hundreds of backstretch personnel who were so brave and who have been affected, and we owe them all our deepest, deepest sympathy and support, our gratitude for having performed, and we are concerned of course about their health going forward...we are doing everything we can (to) have the money flowing, and to make it count, every last dollar.”

Goodrich said that by consensus the CTHF has taken the lead in the distribution of funds to victims. He noted that because CTHF is a non-profit (501c3) organization that provides financial assistance, medical, dental and other services to racetrack workers, CTHF “has the ability to distribute badly needed money in a hurry to victims of the fire” in consultation with those who helped organize the collection of funds, chiefly the Stronach Group, Del Mar, and Los Alamitos Race Course.

Ritvo expressed a loss for words to adequately express The Stronach Group’s sorrow for the victims and appreciation for the bravery of those who helped save the trapped horses. ‘We will do everything on our part to continue to try to make life better for the people who have lost so much.’ He promised “fast and swift reaction” in the construction of barns to replace the 225 stalls lost at SLR, roughly half its capacity, both at SLR and Santa Anita. He said there will be a memorial service for the victims on opening day (December 26) of the Santa Anita winter meet.

- The Board adopted a regulatory amendment requiring all those riding in jog carts during harness horse training to wear approved safety vests and safety helmets.
- The Board adopted a regulatory amendment requiring the scratch of any horse whose true sex is not reported to the racing office prior to the opening of wagering for that race, which in most cases for thoroughbred racing would be 8 a.m. for early bird wagering.
- The Board approved for public notice a proposed regulatory amendment to treat net purse earnings by trainers and jockeys the same as has been the case for owners in that 0.3 percent shall be automatically deducted for horse welfare through the California Retirement Management Account (CARMA). There is an opt-out provision for all participants. Vice Chair Auerbach recused herself from this discussion and approval due to her heavy involvement in CARMA.
- The Board authorized a continuing deduction from advance deposit wagering (ADW) revenue for the vanning and stabling program.
- Executive Director Rick Baedeker reported that handle increased by nearly 10 percent in November from the previous year, largely due to wagering on the Breeders’ Cup. This raised total 2017 handle throughout the state to slightly more than 2016 wagering through November.

- Baedeker also reported that staff counsel Phillip Laird will be leaving the CHRB in January to become Deputy General Counsel in the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency.

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