

STAFF ANALYSIS

DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY THE BOARD TO APPROVE THE REQUEST BY HUMBOLDT COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION FOR RACE DATES IN 2025.

Regular Board Meeting
May 15, 2025

ISSUE:

On or about February 28, 2025, the California Horse Racing Board (“CHRB” of “the Board”) received a request for racing dates from the Humboldt County Fair Association (“HCFA”). HCFA has requested race dates for three successive weekends between August 13, 2025, through and including September 1, 2025. If approved, HCFA will run its race meet independently of the California Authority of Racing Fairs (“CARF”) and with support from Bernal Park Racing LLC.

ANALYSIS:

Business & Professions Code § 19440(a)(6) authorizes the Board to allocate racing dates and CHRB Rule 1430 requires that the Board allocate racing dates in a way that “will best subserve the purposes of the Horse Racing Law and which will be in the best interests of the people of California in accord with the intent of the Horse Racing Law.” The Board is authorized to allocate fractional racing weeks of four days or less. See Bus. & Prof. Code § 19414.5. The Board may, at any time, change, limit, restrict, or reallocate racing weeks. Bus. & Prof. Code § 19530(b).

Should the Board decide to award these race days and approve this race meet, HCFA will have the right to simulcast and collect wagers for both out-of-state races as well as other races happening simultaneously in California in the southern and central zones. See Bus. & Prof. Code § 19596.2 (permitting simulcasting of out-of-state thoroughbred races) and § 19601 (permitting simulcasting of in-state races). If the Board does not award HCFA with the above-proposed race dates, the active race meet in the southern zone during these dates will be deemed to be operating in the northern zone for the purpose of simulcasting and related wagering. Bus. & Prof. Code § 19531(d)(3).

This issue was considered at the Board’s last meeting on April 17, 2025, and the item only garnered two of the required four votes for allocation. See Bus. & Prof. Code § 19431(c).

BACKGROUND:

Authority:

Bus. & Prof. Code § 19440 (in part): (a) The board shall have all powers necessary and proper to enable it to carry out fully and effectually the purposes of this chapter. Responsibilities of the board shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(6) Allocation of racing dates to qualified associations in accordance with law.

CHRB Rule 1430 (Board Allocation of Racing Dates): The Board shall allocate racing weeks and dates for the conduct of horse racing in this State for such time periods and at such racing facilities as the Board determines will best subserve the purposes of the Horse Racing Law and which will be in the best interests of the people of California in accord with the intent of the Horse Racing Law. Upon a finding by the Board that the allocation of racing weeks and dates for any racing year is completed, the racing weeks and dates so allocated shall be subject to reconsideration or amendment only for conditions unforeseen at the time of the allocations. The allocation of racing weeks and dates does not commit the Board to the granting of a license to conduct a horseracing meeting to any specific racing association nor for the allotted time period nor at the racing facility scheduled for such racing weeks and dates.

Bus. & Prof. Code § 19414.5 (Racing Days, Weeks, and Fractional Weeks): (a) "Racing days" are days on which a licensed racing association or fair is authorized by the board to conduct horse racing.

(b) "Racing weeks" are seven consecutive days during which a licensed racing association or fair is authorized by the board to conduct horse racing for a minimum of five racing days. The board, however, upon joint petition of the association or fair and the organization representing horsemen participating in the meeting of that association or fair, may authorize the conduct of horse racing for less than five racing days. Fractional racing weeks of four days or less may be authorized by the board at the beginning and end of any horse racing meeting. Fractional weeks may also be authorized during weeks containing holidays and during periods of overlap with thoroughbred meetings and fairs if the total number of weeks authorized by the board in any calendar year for each breed does not exceed the maximum annual allocation of racing weeks provided for in Article 6 (commencing with Section 19530). If a licensed racing association holds a split meeting, each part of the split meeting shall be deemed a horse racing meeting solely for the purposes of authorizing fractional racing weeks.

Bus. & Prof. Code § 19530: (a) The board shall have the authority to allocate racing weeks to an applicant or applicants pursuant to the provisions of this article and Article 6.5 (commencing with Section 19540) and to specify such racing days, dates, and hours for horse racing meetings as will be in the public interest, and will subserve the purposes of this chapter. The decision of the board as to those racing days, dates, and hours shall be subject to change, limitation, restriction, or reallocation only by the board. No municipality or county shall adopt or enforce any ordinance or regulation that has or may have the effect of directly or indirectly regulating, limiting, restricting, or reallocating the racing days and dates of horse racing meetings.

(b) The board may, at any time, change, limit, restrict, or reallocate racing weeks, days, or dates that are allocated pursuant to this section regardless of whether a condition giving rise to that action is foreseen at the time of allocation or whether a license is issued to conduct a horse racing meeting during an allocated week, day, or date. The board's exercise of authority pursuant to this subdivision is not a revocation subject to the proceedings required by Section 19461, regardless of any effect on a license issued under this chapter.

Bus. & Prof. Code § 19531 (in part): (d) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, if the board does not license a thoroughbred race meet to be conducted by a racing association at a racetrack located in the cities of Berkeley and Albany after July 1, 2024, a thoroughbred racing association, or racing fair, in the southern or central zone licensed by the board to conduct a thoroughbred race meet or fair meet shall, during racing weeks not allocated by the board for a race meet in the northern zone, be deemed to be operating in the northern zone for the purpose of conducting all permissible forms of wagering in the northern zone pursuant to this chapter and making and receiving required distributions from those wagers in accordance with this chapter.

(2) Required distributions described in paragraph (1) shall be made in accordance with the requirements applicable to a racing association in the northern zone and any consent or approval rights shall be exercised by the appropriate racing association or racing fair in the central or southern zone conducting racing.

(3) The amounts generated for purses and commissions pursuant to this subdivision shall be used to pay simulcast funding requirements and board support that the thoroughbred racing associations and racing fair in the central or southern zones are required to make under Section 19616.51. Any remaining funds after those payments are made shall be distributed to each thoroughbred racing association and racing fair in the central and southern zone proportionally based on their respective handle in the central and southern zone during the previous fiscal year and that money shall be divided between purses and commissions in the same relative proportion as was generated in the central and southern zone during the previous fiscal year.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is presented for Board discussion and action.

MOIRA KENNY, CEO

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION

1250 5th Street
Ferndale, California 95536
Telephone: (707) 786-9511
ceo@humboldtcountyfair.org

February 28, 2025

Sent via email to: cschaney@chrh.gov

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Sent via email to: oscargonzalesjr@gmail.com

Oscar Gonzales, Jr.
Chairman, Racing Dates Committee
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Re: Humboldt County Fair Association Application for Racing Dates in 2025

Dear Executive Director Chaney and Racing Dates Committee Chairman Gonzales:

The Humboldt County Fair Association, has elected to perpetuate its tradition of offering a live race meet for the benefit of owners, trainers, breeders, horsemen, employees and live racing fans in the Northern California region. Specifically, we are requesting race dates for three successive weekends between August 13, 2025, through and including September 1, 2025.

In making this request the HCFA is cognizant of the challenges in running a race meet outside of CARF, the horse population, the funding of related expenses and the variables required to run an entertaining, safe and self-sustaining race meet. Prior to making this request representatives of the HCFA have consulted with industry professionals affiliated with the Sonoma County Fair when it ran a meet outside of CARF, horsemen interested in returning to Ferndale, representatives of Monarch, NOTWINK, and those providing services necessary to conduct a race meet.

In determining that Humboldt is able to conduct a successful meet when awarded the requested race dates please consider the following:

1. Race Dates from August 13 and September 1, 2025

These dates, inclusive of Humboldt's traditional dates, were carefully chosen to maximize horse population, on-site fan participation and to sync seamlessly in between other racing venues in the region.

The requested dates are wedged purposely and perfectly between regional race meets after Tillamook and before Grant's Pass late summer meet. This was done after discussion with Oregon racing officials and horsemen. These dates fill a void in that racing calendar and ensure a significant horse population in addition to horses already located in California. Humboldt shall continue to offer horsemen incentives, bonus plans, special events and hands on assistance with workers compensation issues, as needed. These horses are primarily California Breds, not able to successfully compete with the upper echelon horse population running at Del Mar. These horses still exist and have nowhere else in California to run. Humboldt is confident it can attract enough horses to provide an exciting live racing product running two days a week (Saturday and Sunday) its first two weeks and three days over the Labor Day weekend.

2. Financial Viability

The HCFA board is aware of the expense involved in conducting a live horse race meet and replacing the services previously provided by CARF. With that in mind, contact has been made with prominent California based owners, breeders and live horse racing supporters who have confirmed an intent to assist with the meeting of expenses once HCFA is awarded the dates it requests.

Last year the Humboldt raced for three weeks without overlap for the first time in its history. The results were astounding and establish a track record of precedent that live racing at Ferndale can self-sustain.

The 2024 meet generated \$353,000 in underpayment of purses. All other CARF venues were overpaid. The Humboldt meet generated enough purse money to wipe out the overpayment from other fair venues. In 2025, that established record will enable Humboldt to offer even higher purses and entice additional horses to participate in its three week meet.

In addition, the 2024 meet generated over \$900,000 in commissions. This amount is enough to sustain the fair and its live horse racing activities. It is also assurance that those who advanced funds to cover the pre-meet expenses will be able to be paid back out of commissions once received.

The HCFA in recent years has invested in retrofitting its Grandstand, Re-roofing its barns, widening its track, improved railings/fencing and otherwise investing in its racing facilities.

Unlike the fair race meets that came before Humboldt in 2024, Ferndale was able to generate purses and commissions for CARF and itself.

3. Staffing a Live Race Meet

HCFA is collaborating with appropriate industry professionals including those involved in conducting a live race meet at Santa Rosa outside of CARF and those within CARF to provide an outline of the services needed to conduct a live race meet. The fine tuning of those expenses and retention of staff and services necessary for our race meet shall begin in earnest once HCFA is awarded the requested race dates. There is no shortage of industry professionals eager to help in any way they can in perpetuation of live racing in Northern California.

4. Conclusion

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of live horse racing to the Humboldt County Fair and the citizens of Humboldt County. Ferndale has been the site of the Humboldt County Fair since 1896. As a spectator sport, horse racing flourished in Ferndale and is a mainstay of the fair. The popularity of our August fair to locals and tourists alike brings in millions in revenue to the shops, restaurants, hotels and attractions throughout our county.

It is not only horse racing that takes you back to “yesteryear” in Ferndale. The entire community, with its unique atmosphere of Victorian structures, bountiful shops and friendly residents, recreates a sense of times past. This unique treasure of a live racing venue was aptly summarized by the CALIFORNIA THOROUGHBRED in its article “Escape to Ferndale...Racing As Its Meant to Be.” (copy attached).

The HCFA Board along with the residents of our county continue to strongly support live racing with strong attendance and a determined resolve to perpetuate our historic live racing tradition. Humboldt is no stranger to having to self-advocate for its race dates. The year 2024 was our best year ever and we anticipate 2025 can be even better still. As an important by-product of our meet we continue to foster new race fans, respectfully embrace horsemen who have no other place to race, provide a competitive venue for Cal Breds and to assist the California Horse Racing industry.

Scott Chaney
Oscar Gonzales, Jr.
Page 4
February 28, 2025

We respectfully ask that you consider the factors above and allow Humboldt to perpetuate its live racing tradition by granting our requested dates.

Sincerely,

Moira Kenny, CEO
Humboldt County Fair

Attachments: Proposed Racing Calendar 2025
"Escape to Ferndale...Racing as Its Meant to Be"

Humboldt County Fair - 2025 Proposed Racing Dates

August						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Ferndale	7
Simo Only	9

Humboldt Dates Request

Simulcast Revenue 2024 Comparative Dates

Week 1 - Humboldt Request: August 13 - 19, 2025

Comp: August 14 - 20, 2024	Handle	Purses	Commissions	Total Purses & Comms
N-Cal Off Track	1,769,661	67,815	56,855	124,671
N-Cal ADW	5,061,169	222,631	194,216	416,847
N-Cal Total	6,830,830	290,446	251,072	541,518

Week 2 - Humboldt Request: August 20 - 26, 2025

Comp: August 21 - 27, 2024	Handle	Purses	Commissions	Total Purses & Comms
N-Cal Off Track	2,297,993	75,430	65,730	141,160
N-Cal ADW	5,400,207	225,243	201,606	426,848
N-Cal Total	7,698,200	300,673	267,336	568,009

Week 3 - Humboldt Request: August 27 - September 2, 2025

Comp: Aug 28 - Sept 3, 2024	Handle	Purses	Commissions	Total Purses & Comms
N-Cal Off Track	2,642,542	87,364	74,372	161,736
N-Cal ADW	6,274,547	277,201	244,196	521,397
N-Cal Total	8,917,088	364,565	318,568	683,133

Week 4 - No Humboldt 2025 Dates Request, Humboldt Hosted in 2024

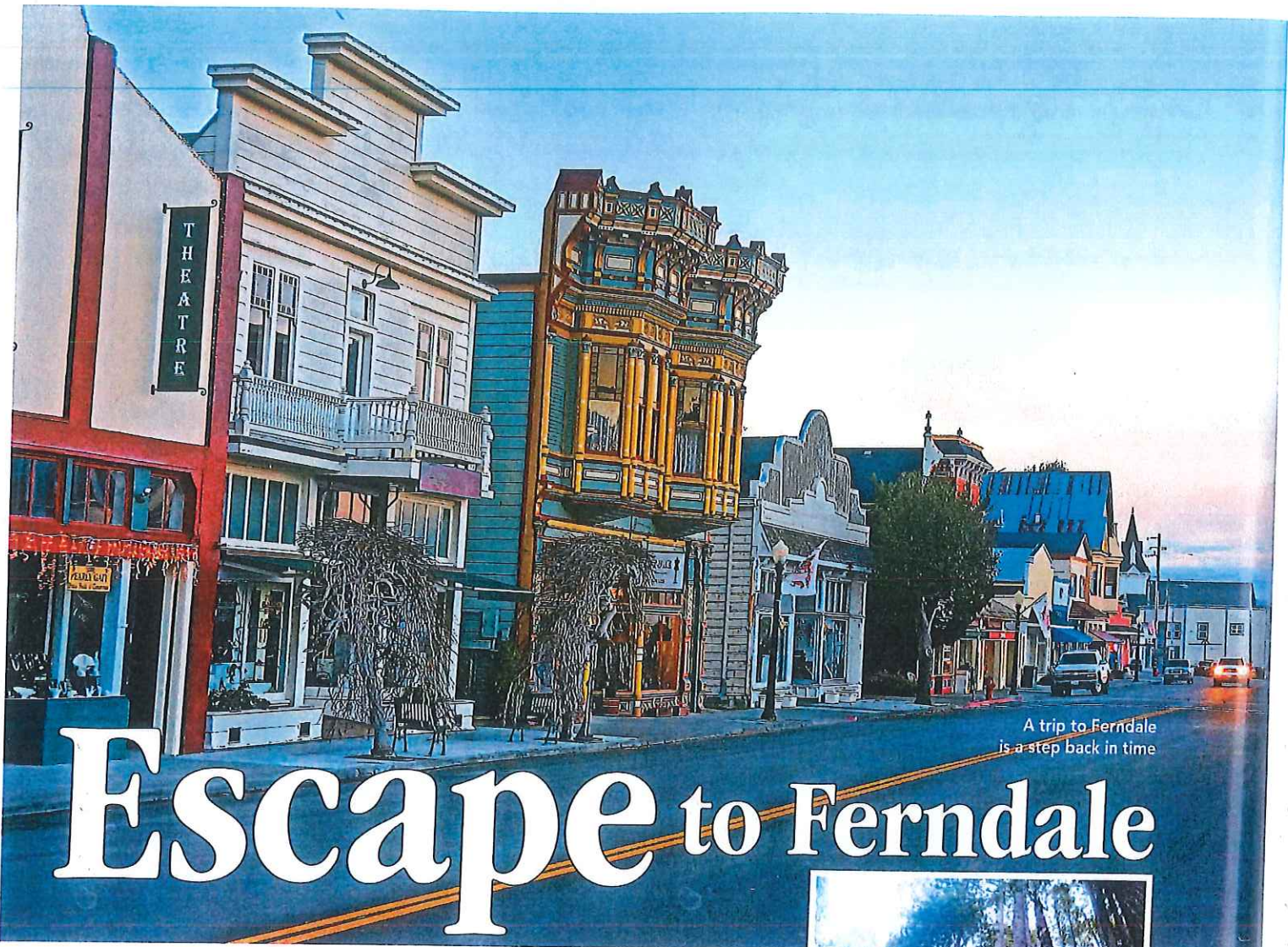
Comp: September 4 - 10, 2024	Handle	Purses	Commissions	Total Purses & Comms
N-Cal Off Track	1,751,877	64,172	53,776	117,948
N-Cal ADW	4,339,747	198,210	170,872	369,082
N-Cal Total	6,091,624	262,382	224,647	487,030

Week 5 - No Humboldt 2025 Dates Request, Humboldt Hosted @ Fresno Fair in 2024

Comp: September 11 - 17, 2024	Handle	Purses	Commissions	Total Purses & Comms
N-Cal Off Track	1,445,226	46,003	42,334	88,336
N-Cal ADW	3,766,007	147,247	139,706	286,953
N-Cal Total	5,211,233	193,250	182,040	375,290

Weekly Averages

Aug 14 - Sept 17, 2024	Handle	Purses	Commissions	Total Purses & Comms
N-Cal Off Track	1,981,460	68,157	58,613	126,770
N-Cal ADW	4,968,335	214,106	190,119	404,226
N-Cal Total	6,949,795	282,263	248,733	530,996



A trip to Ferndale is a step back in time

Escape to Ferndale

RACING AS IT'S MEANT TO BE

BY JACK SHINAR

I didn't know if Ferndale would be the cure-all for my troubles; but as the misery index in Sacramento clicked up to 107 degrees just a few days after my ailing father had passed away, I knew it was worth a try.

And so we packed up the Ford and made the six-hour drive to the remote coast (seven hours if you use State Route 36—DON'T DO IT!), arriving at the northwest corner of the state in mid-August for the opening weekend of the 2019 Humboldt County

Fair racing meet.

This half-mile oasis in the redwoods about 17 miles southwest of Eureka had been on my bucket list for decades: Ferndale, jokingly called the "Saratoga of the West."

Horse racing friends and colleagues had regaled us with the joys of turning back the clock—way back—in this charming Victorian-era hamlet on the edge of California's Lost Coast. I've been to racetracks big and small all over the map; this summer, I would, as it turned out, finally add Ferndale to the places where I failed to cash a ticket.

Who needs to pick a winner? At the



GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Humboldt County Fair the fields are generally small (the starting gate holds eight, but is rarely full) and the gambling is secondary. Ferndale has something more.

What I found in Ferndale was exactly what I had hoped for. The weather was great and the air clean. There was pure joy in the crowded grandstand, which can hold about 2,000 fans. Friendly faces crowded together on the track apron while still others camped out on blankets and portable chairs on the grassy area bordering the saddling paddock. The track, which sits on the edge of town next door to Ferndale High School, and the grandstand face mountains in the distance, dense with gigantic redwoods. To call it picturesque is an understatement.

And people there love horse racing.

This was a feeling I hadn't had since probably in the 1980s, back before simulcasting and, later, account wagering from home pretty much emptied the tracks of fans except for only the biggest of race days. At Ferndale the buzz between races from the crowd of close to 6,000 never stopped. It was electric, invigorating, and a whole lot of fun.

"On a big weekend race day we'll have 7,000 come through here," said Richard Conway, the Humboldt County Fair general manager for the past seven years and a former horse trainer himself. "It's a different feel; it's a community event. Horse racing is a huge draw for us. On a non-race day, our attendance is light. Racing's an annual event, and it's huge. You'll have people who've been coming here for 30 years, and you'll see the same people in the same spot every day."

The Saratoga comparison is tongue-in-cheek, of course, although both tracks date back to the 1800s with grandstands to match. At Ferndale, they usually run a mule race, an Arabian race, and five or six Thoroughbred heats, mostly in the \$4,000 claiming range or thereabouts. It hardly compares to upstate New York, where world-class runners contest races at some of the highest purse levels anywhere. But Ferndale's old wooden grandstand and the betting area below with wooden floors do remind one of, say, a small slice of Saratoga.

"You run at Aqueduct or Belmont, that's one thing," Conway said. "They have important races, and they run for big purses.



Cal-bred Thoroughbreds make important contributions to Humboldt County Fair's race meet



Like Saratoga's, Ferndale's grandstand dates back to the 1800s

But when you are in Saratoga (during the race season), you get the sense that everyone is there for a reason. That's Saratoga.

"But that's kind of the same thing in Ferndale. The whole town comes to life. It's funny—it's hard to describe. But if you walk through the grandstand, you kind of pick up on it. It's more about the attitude."

Conway said the two-week fair puts about \$8 million into the local economy. Everywhere you go in town, businesses posted signs advertising the fair. Still other signs announced: "Racing starts at 2 p.m." The town seems nearly empty while racing is in progress.

"The local businesses really step up," Conway said. "Whether it's giving away gift certificates or gift cards for gasoline, the community supports this event."

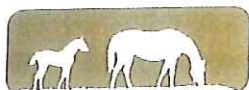
There was more at stake this year, noted Conway, because cuts in state funding had left the fair with a \$300,000 shortfall that had to be made up through local sponsorships and community support.

"This year will be the highest ever for our sponsorship program. We will cover the entire \$300,000. For a community of 100,000, that's pretty good."

I wasn't the only visiting racetracker to make the pilgrimage. Veteran trainer Art Sherman of California Chrome fame was on hand, not to saddle a horse but to experience the Ferndale magic for the first time. He and track announcer Chris Griffin regaled about 1,000 fans with old war stories prior to the races, and Sherman stuck around for most of the afternoon posing with fairgoers for pictures and signing autographs.

"I said, 'This time, I'm going to make time' because I don't know how long these tracks are going to be around," said 82-year-old Sherman. "I said, 'I've got to come up here.' And I'm so happy I did. I'm having such a good time. We were walking around town—we had a ball. This is fun. It really is."

Griffin, now the voice of California fair



Racetracks

racing and who also calls the winter meet at Sam Houston Race Park in Texas, got his start at Ferndale five years ago.

“(Prior race caller) Frank Mirahmadi was a very close friend of mine at the time, and I was transitioning from the Harlem Globetrotters (as their public address announcer) and they had an opportunity for the track announcer at Ferndale,” Griffin recalled. “They said, ‘Well, we haven’t heard you make a race call, but Frank says you can call a race and we’ll believe you can call a race.’ So that was my opportunity to debut. It was a great two weeks.”

Longtime Southern California turf writer Kevin Modesti, whose parents lived in Eureka for several years, first came to Ferndale to cover the fair meet’s 100th anniversary. That was 23 years ago, and he’s come every August since.

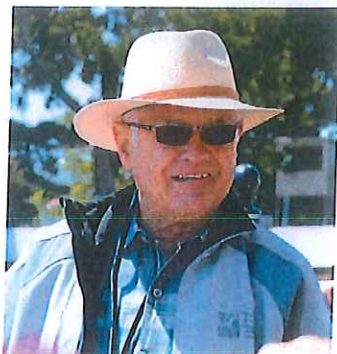
He said he is captivated by the whole scene and finds it refreshing compared to what he’s used to at bigger tracks. One thing you’ll notice, Modesti pointed out, is very few of the patrons carry the *Daily Racing Form* or past performance printouts.

“They don’t really know much about racing, and they don’t care about the odds,” Modesti said. “They just want to have a winner.”

A friend from Sacramento who has attended the races at Ferndale several times spent his August at both Saratoga and Del Mar this year. He enjoyed the big-time racing, he said, but missed the atmosphere and feeling he got by attending the Humboldt County Fair. A visit to Humboldt always warmed his heart.

“Ferndale never disappoints,” he surmised.

That attitude has been at the heart of fair racing since the 1930s, and it remains an important part of making and keeping fans today. Each year, Ferndale struggles to hang onto its race dates in the face of greater handle potential elsewhere. The just-concluded meet was conducted while fully overlapped with summer racing from Golden Gate Fields, which surely didn’t help the fair meet with field size or handle.



“This time, I’m going to make time [to come to the Ferndale races] because I don’t know how long these tracks are going to be around.”

— Art Sherman

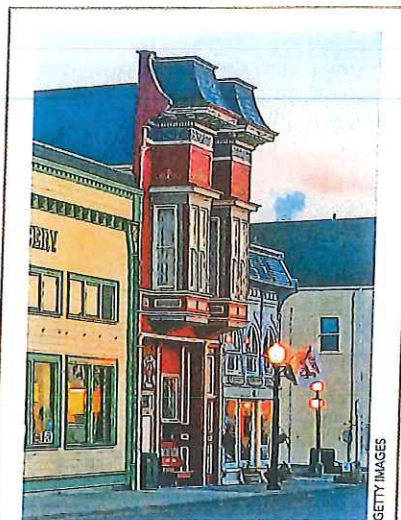


The Ferndale folks love their horse racing

DEBBIE ARRINGTON PHOTOS

that we stay relevant and can continue,” Conway explained. “If you take that away (simulcast hosting), we’ll collapse. So the thing we hope to do is find some even ground somewhere.”

A lot of summer racing fans agree. In its own way, Ferndale is special. I saw that for myself. 🐾



GETTY IMAGES

Palace Bar in downtown Ferndale

Things to Do in Ferndale

California racing steward Will Meyers has been assigned to the Ferndale meet nearly every year since 1984. Here he lists five must-do things in the region that he enjoys whenever possible.

- 1 Have a drink at the Palace Bar in downtown Ferndale. It claims to be the farthest west watering hole in the continental U.S.
- 2 Visit the Loleta Cheese Factory just outside Ferndale, the best cheese in California. If you have the time, order a grilled cheese sandwich from the kitchen and stroll the lush garden adjacent to the store.
- 3 Hike the Elk River trailhead, including the ghost town of Falk walking tour. It’s off Herrick Boulevard toward Eureka, an easy one-mile walk on a paved path, then goes on for miles of dirt path.
- 4 Visit Samoa Cookhouse for breakfast. It’s across the bay from Eureka. It features old lumberjack (family)-style service, where the food is passed around on platters. The lobby is like a small museum. The uniqueness of the experience is worth the trip.
- 5 Visit old-town Eureka and eat at the Sea Grill or Cafe Waterfront for amazing seafood.

Bonus pick: Farther north past Arcata on Highway 101 is Trinidad, featuring astounding ocean views.



Business Plan: Humboldt Race Meet

1. Executive Summary

Event Name: Humboldt Race Meet

Date: August 13th, 2025 -September 2nd, 2025

Race Dates: August 16th, 17th, 23rd, 24th, 30th, 31st and September 1st, 2025

Location: Humboldt County Fairgrounds, 1250 5th St., Ferndale, CA 95536

Funding Sponsor: Bernal Park Racing

Expected Attendance: 6,000-8,000 per day during racing days

Event Type: Thoroughbred Racing

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Humboldt Race Meet is to host a premier horse racing event that showcases Thoroughbred racing, provides an engaging and memorable experience for attendees, and supports the local economy through tourism and sponsorship. Rooted in the tradition of old-time horse racing, the meet offers a vital gateway for new owners, trainers, jockeys, and backstretch workers to enter the sport—helping to sustain and grow the future of California Horse Racing.

2. Event Overview

Event Description:

The Humboldt Race Meet is a 7-day Thoroughbred racing meet held at the historic Humboldt County Fairgrounds. The meet will feature 8–10 races per day and include family-friendly activities as part of the fairgrounds' agricultural and cultural offerings.

- **Date:** August 16th -24th & Aug. 30th-Sept.1st, 2025
- **Venue:** Humboldt County Fairgrounds, Ferndale, CA — a scenic and traditional racing location in Northern California with strong community ties and established fairground infrastructure

- **Races:** 2-3 Thoroughbred race days weekly during the race meet
- **Prize Pool:** ~\$850,000 total; average \$121,500 per day
- **Incentives:** ~\$75,000

Key Attractions:

- VIP Experience
 - Live music from regional performers
 - Full-service concession operations.
 - **Ladies Hat Day** continues to be a standout attraction during the race meet, drawing strong community interest and adding a festive, celebratory atmosphere that enhances the overall event experience.
-

3. Market Research & Analysis

Industry Overview:

Horse racing remains a powerful economic and cultural force, with U.S. betting revenue exceeding \$116B annually. Humboldt's Race Meet taps into this tradition while offering a unique rural Northern California experience.

Key Trends:

- Growth in mobile/online betting
- Demand for family-oriented racetrack events
- Increased fan engagement through tech and social media

Target Audience:

- **Demographics:** All ages- families, tourists, racing fans
- **Special Groups:** Corporate hosts, regional racing syndicates, and media

Competition:

- Local and tribal casinos
- Online sports betting platforms

Competitive Advantage:

- Humboldt Race Meet provides a competitive venue

- Humboldt County Fairgrounds offers a storied venue with community support
 - A comprehensive entertainment package combining racing, culture, and hospitality
 - Grassroots starts with rural charm and scenic appeal
 - New fan bases are created
-

4. Marketing Strategy

Branding & Positioning:

- Tagline: *“Racing in the Redwoods”*
- Consistent visual identity for ads, digital content, and merchandise
- Grassroots racing appeal

Promotion Channels:

- **Social Media:** Interactive posts, livestreams, giveaways
- **Website:** Ticketing, vendor lists, race schedules, sponsor profiles
- **Traditional Media:** Radio, print ads, billboards across Humboldt and Northern CA
- **Sponsorships:** Tiered packages (title sponsor, VIP terrace, race naming rights)
- **Media Partners:** Local papers, equine trade outlets, and regional tourism boards

Ticketing Strategy:

- **General Admission:** Free with fair entry
 - **VIP Sponsor Access-** Free fair/race entry and VIP lounge
 - **Early Bird Sales:** Merch bundles and pre-sale perks
-

5. Operations Plan

Venue Setup:

- **Track:** Existing half-mile track maintained to CHRB/HISA standards
- **Stables:** Secure equine housing with vet oversight 200 Permanent 100-200 Portable

- **Hospitality Areas:** Grandstands, bars, restaurants, VIP areas
- **Infrastructure:** PA systems, security, sanitation, and mobile wagering

Staffing:

- Race officials, announcers, mutuels staff, EMTs
- Guest relations and hospitality team
- Vendor coordinators and grounds maintenance

Permits & Insurance:

- Betting licenses, alcohol permits, animal welfare clearance
 - Comprehensive event insurance, including weather and liability
-

6. Financial Plan

Revenue Streams:

- **Event Sponsorships:** \$115,000
- **Betting Commissions:** \$1,000,000 (including ADW/track share)
- **Concessions:** \$160,000 net
- **Parking Fees:** \$25,000
- **Ticket Sales:** \$0
- **Box Seat and Race Sponsors:** \$30,000

Projected P&L Summary:

- **Total Revenue:** \$1,330,000
- **Total Expenses:** \$1,020,000
- **Net Profit:** \$310,000

Major Expenses:

- **Marketing & Media:** \$75,000
- **Equipment leasing:** \$100,000
- **Incentives:** \$75,000

- **Labor:** \$500,000
 - **HISA/CHRB:** \$150,000
 - **Security:** \$20,000
 - **Miscellaneous:** \$100,000
-

7. Risk Management

Key Risks & Mitigation:

- **Weather:** Plan for fog and coastal dampness; maintain flexible schedules
 - **Security:** Licensed security staff and emergency readiness
-

8. Conclusion

The Humboldt Race Meet at the Humboldt County Fairgrounds continues a proud legacy while serving as a vital launchpad for the next generation in horse racing. By combining top-tier Thoroughbred competition with Humboldt's unique character and community spirit, the meet enhances the fair experience, drives tourism, and delivers meaningful economic benefit. With continued support from sponsors and the California Horse Racing Board, the Humboldt Race Meet is poised to remain a treasured and impactful part of California's summer racing calendar.

JARED HUFFMAN
2ND DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2330 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-5161
WEBSITE: huffman.house.gov

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
RANKING MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0502

April 15, 2025

Scott Chaney, Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 94825

Dear Director Chaney:

I am writing to support the 2025 race dates requested by the Humboldt County Racing Association.

The Humboldt County Fair has a major positive impact on Humboldt County and the region's economy, attracting attendees from all over California and Oregon. This will be the Humboldt County Fair's 129th year.

I ask for consideration for the struggling rural economies and your full and fair consideration of the request for California Horse Racing Board to approve Humboldt County's 2025 race meet dates at your earliest convenience.

Please contact my Senior Advisor Jenny Callaway at 415-258-9657 if you need additional information.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress

SAN RAFAEL
999 FIFTH AVENUE, SUITE 200
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94901
PHONE: (415) 258-9657
FAX: (415) 258-9913

PETALUMA
206 G STREET, #3
PETALUMA, CA 94952
PHONE: (707) 981-8967

UKIAH
200 S. SCHOOL ST.
UKIAH, CA 95482
PHONE: (707) 671-7449
FAX: (707) 962-0905

FORT BRAGG
430 NORTH FRANKLIN STREET
P.O. BOX 2208
FORT BRAGG, CA 95437
PHONE: (707) 962-0933
FAX: (707) 962-0905

EUREKA
317 THIRD STREET, SUITE 1
EUREKA, CA 95501
PHONE: (707) 407-3585
FAX: (707) 407-3559



April 16, 2025

Scott Chaney, Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 94825

Dear Mr. Chaney:

I am reaching out to express my strong support for the 2025 race dates proposed by the Humboldt County Racing Association.

The iconic Humboldt County Fair serves as a vital economic driver for both Humboldt and the surrounding region and draws visitors from throughout the West Coast. This upcoming year marks the Fair's historic 129th anniversary.

Given the economic challenges facing rural communities, I respectfully request the California Horse Racing Board give thorough and equitable consideration to approving Humboldt County's 2025 race meet dates as soon as possible, so they can complete their Fair program.

Please keep me posted on this important issue, and don't hesitate to contact me at 707-445-6508 if you have any questions.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike McGuire".

MIKE MCGUIRE
Senate President pro Tempore

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0002
(916) 319-2002
FAX (916) 319-2102

DISTRICT OFFICE
50 D STREET, SUITE 450
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404
(707) 576-2526
FAX: (707) 576-2297

E-MAIL

Assemblymember.Rogers@assembly.ca.gov

Assembly
California Legislature



CHRIS ROGERS

ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SECOND DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
BUDGET
COMMUNICATIONS AND
CONVEYANCE
TRANSPORTATION
UTILITIES AND ENERGY
WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4 ON
CLIMATE CRISIS, RESOURCES,
ENERGY, AND TRANSPORTATION

April 25, 2025

Scott Chaney, Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 94285

Dear Director Chaney:

I am writing in support of the Humboldt County Racing Association's request for 2025 race dates.

The Humboldt County Fair has been of great importance to the community members and the regional economy for 129 years. Visitors travel from across the state to enjoy the race days, fair, and the beautiful North Coast. Rural economies receive much benefit from events that draw tourism and local residents.

I ask for your consideration in the request for the California Horse Racing Board to approve Humboldt County's race dates. Please feel free to contact my office at 707-445-7014 if you have any questions or require additional information.

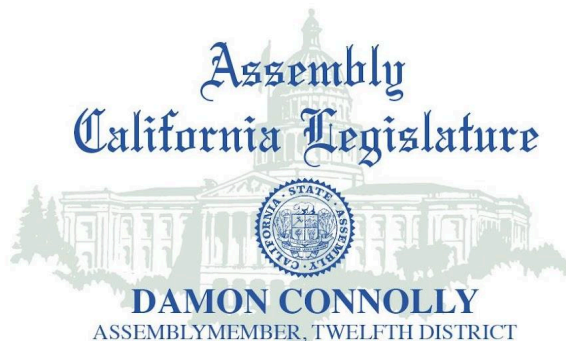
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Rogers".

CHRIS ROGERS
Assemblymember, 2nd District

CR:hm

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0012
(916) 319-2012
FAX (916) 319-2112



COMMITTEES
CHAIR, ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY
AND TOXIC MATERIALS
AGRICULTURE
BUDGET
JUDICIARY
NATURAL RESOURCES
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4 ON
CLIMATE CRISIS, RESOURCES,
ENERGY, AND TRANSPORTATION

April 25, 2025

Scott Chaney, Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Re: Humboldt County Fair 2025 Race Dates

Dear Director Chaney,

I am writing to respectfully express my strong support for the approval of the 2025 race dates requested by the Humboldt County Fair.

The Humboldt County Fair is not only a long-standing tradition, celebrating its 129th year, but also an important economic and cultural hub for our rural Northern California communities. The annual race meet brings together residents, visitors, and horsemen and women from across the region and beyond, providing a vital boost to the local economy by supporting jobs, tourism, and small businesses.

During the 2023-24 legislative session, I had the privilege of chairing the Joint Committee on Fairs Allocation and Classification. Through this role, I had the opportunity to tour the Humboldt County Fairgrounds and was impressed by the quality of their leadership, the institution's rich history, and its impact in the community. I remain involved in fair-related issues through the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 2143 last year and my authorship of AB 258 this legislative session. Ensuring the success of California's fairs continues to be one of my top priorities.

For these reasons, I respectfully request the consideration of the California Horse Racing Board to approve the Humboldt County Fair's 2025 race date request. Your support is crucial to preserving this tradition and sustaining rural California communities and local economies.

If you need additional information in regards to this request, please email my Chief of Staff, Aaron Vad at Aaron.Vad@asm.ca.gov or call (916) 319-2012.

Sincerely,

DAMON CONNOLLY
Assemblymember, 12th District



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

825 5TH STREET, ROOM 111
EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501 PHONE: (707) 476-2390

Sent via email to: cschaney@chrh.com

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

May 3, 2025

Re: Humboldt County Reliance on Traditional Live Horse Racing Dates

Executive Director Chaney and CHRB Board Members:

As long as I have been alive, horse racing at the Humboldt County Fair (HCF) has been embraced and cherished as the magnetic event that pulls our community together for a fabulous farewell to summer event. Class and Family Re-unions are scheduled years in advance to coordinate around our live racing dates.

After decades of battling to race without overlap, 2024 was the most successful year ever with three weeks of live racing. The community supported the event each and every race day. Purses and commissions were generated to support this ongoing tradition.

I am a longtime Supervisor for Humboldt County, which owns the fairgrounds. In anticipation of perpetuating this important community tradition, the Board of Supervisors allocated \$1,000,000 in earthquake relief funds to make sure that the HCF Grandstand was safely retrofitted in the wake of a damaging earthquake. The HCF Board and sponsors have spared no expense in maintaining the barns and racing surface for the protection of the horses that come to race.

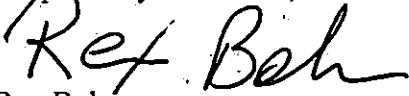
This is the main event each year on the Humboldt County calendar. Horse racing generates more than \$7,000,000 each year to the non-fair connected shops, restaurants and accommodations. More importantly, it is an event that brings the citizens of our County and visitors together for a live horse racing event like no other.

Last year was our best year ever. We have fought tenaciously against the powers that be to maintain our historic place on the racing calendar since 1895. This year we have procured guaranteed funding and based on our track record from last year we are confident in our ability to generate sustaining commissions, provide competitive purses and to perpetuate our tradition of exciting live racing.

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
Page 2
May 3, 2025

Industry influencers with vested self-interests should not be sanctioned to wipe out the 129-year tradition of live racing at a California venue that is self-supporting, well attended and crucial to the economic welfare of Humboldt County.

Respectfully submitted,



Rex Bohn
Humboldt County Supervisor

cc: Greg Ferraro, CHRB Chairman walkingdog1@gmail.com
Oscar Gozales, Vice Chair oscargonzalesjr@gmail.com
Brenda Davis BDavis@bwdlawgroup.com
Tom Hudnut tom@tomhudnut.com
Damascus Castellanos dcastellanos@teamsters495.org
Dennis V. Alfieri



April 16, 2025

Scott Chaney, Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 94825

Dear Mr.Chaney:

As a son of Humboldt County and more specifically, Ferndale, the Humboldt County Fair holds a very special place in my heart. In a rural area like Ferndale, the Fair breathes life into the community, enriches the local economy, strengthens our sense place and celebrates everything that remains beautiful about Small Town America.

Without question, the highlight and driving force behind the Fair, now in its 129th year, is the horse racing meet. Without meet dates in 2025, I worry for the fate of the Humboldt County Fair and for every community member to whom the Fair means so much.

Respectfully, I urge you to please give every consideration to approving Humboldt's 2025 meet dates.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Guy Fieri". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a prominent "G" and "F".

Guy Fieri
Knuckle Sandwich LLC
guy@guyfieri.com

(HUMBOLDT COUNTY FAIR-OSCAR GONZALES)

MR. GONZALES,

Tom Ward is a good friend, and I certainly want to “second” his feeling about the Humboldt County Fair receiving dates for 2025. I also commend your efforts to stand up for the “little guy” in this seemingly one-sided fight.

Fairs like Ferndale have proved vital to Northern California horse racing. They introduce new fans to this great sport, give trainers and owners of smaller less successful stables during the year an opportunity to get back on their feet financially, continue the long-standing tradition of the Northern California summer circuit and provide a major contribution to the local economy. In short, the Humboldt Fair (Ferndale has hosted 128 years of horse racing) has been a cherished tradition that celebrates horse racing along with agriculture and entertainment and has become a cultural pillar for the community.

Ferndale is a town of approximately 1,700, but more than 5,000 fans have regularly packed the Humboldt track during summer race programs. It’s one of the few racetracks that attracts more fans than the population of the host town. Arguably, Ferndale has been the most popular stop on the Nor Cal summer fair circuit. It’s definitely been number one in local newspaper coverage and boasts the only radio coverage with post-race shows on a ESPN affiliate during the summer season.

Horse racing is promoted to the max, and fans have shown their appreciation.

Art Sherman, who trained 2014 Kentucky Derby winner and two-time Horse of the Year California Chrome, was a special 2018 guest of the Humboldt Fair and has expressed his love for Ferndale. Jay Hovdey and Jay Privman, both members of the Joe Hirsch Media Roll of Honor at the National Racing Hall of Fame, have also been guests of the Humboldt and would “second” Art Sherman’s admiration for Ferndale racing. Doug O’Neill, who has saddled a pair of Kentucky Derby winners, won the 70th edition of the \$50,000 1-5/8-mile Humboldt Marathon last year with Mucino.

Frank Mirahmadi, current announcer at Santa Anita and Saratoga tracks, and Chris Griffin, the current Aqueduct (NY) race announcer, both called the Ferndale races for several seasons and can express their love for Humboldt Fair racing. Guy Fieri, an Emmy Award-winning media personality and restaurateur, has been one of the biggest financial supporters of the Humboldt Fair in the town where he sold pretzels as a youngster.

Stars of the sport and the common fan have a similar desire—for horse racing to continue at the Humboldt County Fair.

Now, Ferndale has become the last hope to keep horse racing alive in Northern California. And all over the tug-of-war for simulcast revenue during just a three-week span in late August and early September.

Many trainers and backstretch work force have had their lives uprooted and forced to move to Southern California where their racehorses have quickly found they are severely overmatched and not competitive. Races that were at first restricted to just Nor Cal thoroughbreds now have clauses in the conditions that “open” races up to So Cal horses.

Want some examples of how prominent Nor Cal trainers are doing at Santa Anita: (through April 27th): Bill McLean 3 wins-57 starts; Isidro Tamayo (a multiple trainer champ at Golden Gate Fields and on the Fairs) 4-45; Samuel Calvario 1-43; Manuel Badilla 2-26; Marcia Stortz 2-34; Victor Trujillo 0-22; Blaine Wright 1-16; Faith Taylor 1-21; D Wayne Baker 1-14; Sergio Ledezma 1-14.

McLean, Tamayo, Trujillo, Stortz, Baker and Gary Greiner are among trainers who have expressed interest in sending their horses north for a possible Humboldt meet where their stock would relish the “drop-in class.” Along with several other California trainers and horses from Oregon there would be enough backstretch visitors to hold a three-week Humboldt meet.

Ferndale has become the last hope to keep horse racing, which dates back to 1858 in Northern California, alive. Vote to deny the Humboldt County Fair and you lose the sport for good in Northern California. There will not be racing in 2026 in Northern California—the horses will be gone.

Please keep horse racing alive in Northern California by voting to support dates for the Humboldt County Fair. Ferndale fans want to pack the stands again and Northern California does not want this great sport extinguished.

Ellis Davis

**Scott Chaney
Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurly Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825**

May 5, 2025

Re: Allocation of Racing Dates for Humboldt County Fair Meet

Executive Director Chaney and CHRB Directors:

I am a lifelong resident of Ferndale and have been attending horse racing at the Humboldt County Fair (HCF) for over 60 years. My late father was a longtime Pari Mutuel clerk at HCF and several other Northern CA Fair racetracks, so I am very much aware of the importance horse racing has on this rural community. But I am not writing just for the community I so much cherish, but for the men and women involved in the meat and potatoes of what I call minor league horse racing. I am talking about the lower-end owners/trainers, jockeys, and backstretch people who not only put their sweat, but their heart and soul into making the sport the best it can be. They may not be your Bafferts, Coxs, or Fletchers, but they do have their part in making horseracing a valuable and viable business. There needs to be an entry place for people desiring to be the future of horse racing, and a rural meet like HCF gives them this opportunity. Without this opportunity, the upper end will eventually collapse from lack of new participants. Like all sports, the minor league is essential in the contineence of the majors. So, you see, it isn't

a money grab as some people are led to believe, but a love for the sport and it's future. Contraction is not the answer. Revenue enhancement and better promotion along with developing a new approach to the overall business plan will be the savior of the sport in California, not punishing the hard-working people who have always been the backbone for past successes.

I compare the HCF Meet with a small horse from Northern CA (buried at Ridgewood Ranch near Willits, CA) who took on a mighty horse from NY during the Great Depression years. People across this great country were lifted up by this little guy and through his determination, he represented CA gloriously. I believe you all know who I am talking about, and I encourage you to reach deep down and come up with a positive vote for the allocated dates for HCF and for the future of CA Horse Racing.

Sincerely I Remain,

Duane Martin

Avid Horse Race Fan & Loyal Supporter of HCF Racing

cc: Greg Ferraro, CHRB Chairman walkingdog1@gmail.com

Oscar Gonzales, Vice Chair oscargonzalsir@gmail.co

Brenda Davis Bdavis@bwdlawgroup.com

Tom Hudnut tom@tomhudnut.com

Damascus Castellanos dcastellanos@teamsters495.org

Dennis V. Alfieri

Peter Stern

VOSS, COOK & THEL LLP

A LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
2301 DUPONT DRIVE, SUITE 500
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA 92612-7504
TELEPHONE (949) 435-0225
FAX (949) 435-0226

MICHAEL H. VOSS
BRUCE V. COOK
FORMER PARTNERS

AL THEL
Of Counsel

April 8, 2025

FILE NO. 05016.000

VIA E-MAIL

Mr. Scott Chaney
Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

**Re: Proposed Allocation of Racing Dates at Pleasanton (From 6/10/25 – 7/6/25);
Proposed Issuance of License to a New Party to Conduct/Operate Proposed
Pleasanton and Ferndale Race Meets**

Dear Mr. Chaney,

We represent Thoroughbred Owners of California (“TOC” or “our client”) and, in that capacity, we are writing to you regarding the proposed racing dates for Pleasanton (from June 10 – July 6, 2025) (the “Proposed Pleasanton Race Dates” or the “Proposed Pleasanton Race Meet”) that we understand the California Horse Racing Board (“CHRB” or the “Board”) will be considering at the upcoming CHRB Meeting to be held on April 17, 2025.

We understand that the last time Racing Dates were awarded to Pleasanton (i.e., last year), the licensee who operated that 2024 Pleasanton Race Meet was the California Association of Racing Fairs (“CARF”). We also understand that CARF is not intending to be the licensee who will be conducting the Proposed Pleasanton Race Meet (from 6/10/25 – 7/6/25); rather, we understand that the Alameda County Fair is intending to contract with a newly formed third party entity, who will act as the licensee of the Proposed Pleasanton Race Meet.

We do not believe that the statutory and regulatory regime governing these types of matters allow for the Proposed Pleasanton Race Dates to be allocated for a race meet to be conducted by a new licensee on such short notice.

In particular, Section 1431 of the CHRB Rules provides as follows:

“Every person who has not held a license to conduct a horseracing meeting in the preceding year who intends to file an application to conduct an authorized race meeting and/or an application for license to conduct a horseracing meeting shall file with the Board a Notice of Intention to file such applications ... no later than **one hundred**

Mr. Scott Chaney,
Executive Director
April 8, 2025
Page 2

twenty (120) days in advance of the proposed or scheduled date for the commencement of the [race] meeting [in question].... (emphasis added)”

Furthermore, in Section 1 of the CHRB’s “Advisory for Board Meetings” dated October 30, 2024, the CHRB reiterated that “CHRB rules require applications and associated materials to be filed with the Board *at least 90 days* prior to the first day of racing or operation for review, investigation and approval (emphasis added).”

Since the proposed start date for the Proposed Pleasanton Race Meet is June 10, 2025, that proposed start date obviously fails to comply with both the 120-day advance notice period required by the above-cited CHRB Rule 1431 and the minimum 90-day advance notice period referenced in the “Advisory for Board Meetings” that the CHRB issued very recently (i.e., as of October 30, 2024).

We understand that one of the very important reasons for requiring this type of advance notice is so that the CHRB (as well as interested Stakeholders) can have sufficient time to perform due diligence on the proposed licensee by, among other things, investigating the proposed licensee’s financial strength, good character, business plan, marketing plan, and all the other details that go into the ability to operate a clean and successful race meet in California.

Since the time frame between now and the June 10, 2025 proposed start date for the Proposed Pleasanton Race Meet is so short, it appears to us that neither the CHRB nor the various Stakeholders will have sufficient opportunity to conduct the due diligence investigation of the proposed licensee that is so crucial to maintaining the integrity and success of California Horse Race Meetings.

For these reasons, we respectfully request, on behalf of our client, that the CHRB not move forward with allocating the Proposed Pleasanton Race Dates or granting a license to the proposed licensee for the operation of the Proposed Pleasanton Race Meet.

With regard to the proposed racing dates for Humboldt County/Ferndale (August 13 – September 2, 2025), while those racing dates seem to fall within the 120-day statutory/regulatory timeframe, for reasons similar to the underlying rationale for our objections to the Proposed Pleasanton Race Meet, we also respectfully object to the allocation of the proposed racing dates to Humboldt County/Ferndale as well.

In particular, we do not believe the various Stakeholders will have sufficient time to undertake the necessary comprehensive review/analysis of the economic impact to the Industry of that proposed Humboldt County/Ferndale Race Meet. This lack of time is further exacerbated by the fact that it does not appear as if anyone has yet stepped forward to act as the licensee for that proposed Humboldt County/Ferndale Race Meet. Just like with Pleasanton, the CHRB and the Stakeholders will also need sufficient time to perform a full due diligence review on the proposed licensee for that Meet as well.

Mr. Scott Chaney,
Executive Director
April 8, 2025
Page 3

These concerns are heavily influenced by what happened last year when we were all rushed, somewhat at the last minute, to move forward with the October 19 – December 18, 2024 Golden State Meet at Pleasanton. Based upon the rushed nature of that Golden State/Pleasanton Application, combined with the “shock to the Industry’s ecosystem” resulting from new race dates at new locations, the Industry ended-up losing millions of dollars last year as a result of that very rushed process. Given the fragile nature of our California Horseracing Industry, we can ill afford another one of those multi-million dollar debacle.

The TOC greatly appreciates the opportunity to have its “voice heard” on these very important matters.

Sincerely,



Eddie Mishow,
Attorney for the TOC

cc: Client (TOC)

JAMES R. MORGAN, *Special Counsel*

HUMBOLDT COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION

1250 5th Street
Ferneale, California 95536
Telephone: (925) 947-0200
Facsimile: (925) 934-6092

April 12, 2025

Sent via email:

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 93825

Re: Humboldt County Fair Racing Dates Application for August 13-September 2, 2025

Dear Scott and CHRB Board Members:

The Humboldt County Fair Association (HCFA) is privileged to apply for race dates of August 13, 2025, through September 2, 2025. During its 129 years of operation it has traditionally held its race meet in the latter half of August and this year shall be no exception.

It is understood that TOC Leadership and its legal team are aggressively lobbying against our application. Apparently, the south feels that already receiving 49 weeks a year of commissions generated from wagers placed in the north is somehow not enough. North-generated commissions have never gone to the south in the past during this late August time period and there is no justification in precluding HCFA from having a third week of racing just so the south can receive a windfall from money wagered in the north.

To allay any concerns about the viability of our meet during the requested dates, please consider the following:

1. HCFA Three Week Race Meet Shall be Sponsored by Bernal Park Racing, LLC.

The financial obligations for the entire three (3) week meet shall be sponsored by **Bernal Park Racing, LLC**, an entity funded by George Schmidt and John Harris, two stalwart supporters of racing and breeding in California for decades. They recognize the value of maintaining the goodwill and fan base of horse racing fans *in the north* who have been otherwise disenfranchised by the pause in racing in the region. Their aspirations include ongoing negotiations with the County of Alameda to lease the Grandstand, Stable Area and parking

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
Page 2
April 12, 2025

to re-establish the opportunity for live racing at the existing fair venues. Their support shall be with lobbying for horses, including their own, to participate in the live HCFA three-week meet, and additional financial assistance including the following:

a. Procurement of a Bond in Advance of the Meet to Guarantee Purses

Bernal Park Racing, LLC, shall procure the necessary bond (estimated at \$1,000,000) to guarantee purses in advance of the proposed three-week meet. This is the contribution necessary to ensure a financially successful meet.

It is noteworthy that in 2024 HCFA had three weeks without overlap for the first time in recent history. As a result, it had its best meet ever. The underpayment of purses was \$353,000 which replenished the overpayment from other CARF sponsored meets. It is anticipated that with this confirmed sponsorship in place the HCFA can offer a higher level of purses and additional added money events to lure barns from California and the northwest to participate in our 2025 race meet. Purse sponsorship is a luxury our meet has not previously enjoyed and ensures HCFA a great chance at success.

b. Assistance with Maximizing ADW Exposure

The principals of **Bernal Park Racing, LLC** will assist in establishing ADW contracts for the product being offered by the HCFA. To promote racing throughout the state the HCFA always broadcasts Del Mar Races on its Jumbotron and throughout the facility. In contrast, owners from the north attending the Del Mar meet have indicated it is difficult to find any monitor carrying the racing product from the north.

c. Addressing all Funding and Equipment Needs for a Race Meet

In the past, HCFA has been reliant upon CARF to provide funding for expenses and equipment necessary to conduct a race meet. **Bernal Park Racing, LLC** as part of their sponsorship shall make sure HCFA has the equipment and funding needed to conduct a three-week race meet.

d. Assistance with Attracting Horses and TOC Adversity

Keeping the horse before the cart, HCFA cannot obtain firm commitments for participation in their meet until the dates and license are approved. It is perceived that the current leadership of the TOC no longer represents the best interests of owners, trainers and

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
Page 3
April 12, 2025

breeders from the north part of the state, including the interests of prominent breeders George Schmidt and Harris Farms located in the North. The TOC legal team is already lobbying to discourage adoption of the HCFA race dates. **Bernal Park Racing, LLC** has pledged to use their goodwill in the industry to attract horses to the HCFA and to assist in addressing the aggressive tactics of TOC to shut down this 129-year tradition.

2. The Importance of a Three-week Meet

HCFA needs a three-week race meet to attract enough horses to run an exciting race card each Saturday, Sunday and Labor Day. It is a long commute for horses training in California. A three-week meet ensures every horse has an opportunity to run twice, while a two-week meet does not.

Recognizing the challenges of coordinating a successful race meet HCFA leadership have reached out pro-actively and cooperatively to Oregon horsemen and racing venues. It was negotiated that the three-weeks requested by HCFA shall be strategically placed between race meets at Tillamook and Grants Pass without overlap. This is forged regional alliance to create a stable circuit that will be inclusive of lower lever California horses as well.

Overlooked in the divisive rhetoric from TOC and the south are the significant contributions of those who have participated in HCFA's historic live race meet. The breeder of California Chrome raced his first racehorse at the HCF. The owner of 2013 two year old filly champion She's a Tiger, Allen Aldrich, has spent decades supporting the HCF. The owner of Owen Almighty, a Derby contender, ran his first California races at Humboldt. Don Alberto, a co-owner of Derby favorite Journalism, bred the winner of the Humboldt County Marathon last year trained by Doug O'Neill who applauded the HCFA racing experience.

The county supervisors supported a \$1,000,000 retrofit of the grandstand following a recent earthquake. The barns have been modernized with new roofs and hardware. The track has been widened, safety rails upgraded and investments have been made by the community to perpetuate this tradition. The town of Ferndale has fewer than 1,500 residents. The attraction of the region's only live race meet brings in racing enthusiasts from far and wide and more importantly generates an estimated \$7,000,000 in non-fair revenue for accommodations, meals and shops.

It is not, as has been suggested, a commissions grab, but rather the perpetuation of a 129-year cultural tradition and event like no other in this region.

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
Page 4
April 12, 2025

3. Access to Sustainable Generated Commissions from Wagers in the North

In 2024 the HCFA three-week race meet generated approximately \$1,000,000 in commissions. Although payments from CARF have not been fully forthcoming, that is an amount necessary to continue to maintain the facility, pay for the Grandstand retrofit, and sustain this live racing tradition.

There is no basis for TOC and Del Mar to deny HCFA access to a third week generating both incentives for horses to participate and sustaining commissions for our fairgrounds belonging to Humboldt County.

4. Horse Population

Ferndale has always been a favorite destination for 15 to 25 California based trainers whose stock typically cannot compete with the out-of-state imports that populate the Southern California race cards. The HCFA has already obtained commitments from at least 15 trainers eager to return to HCF when race dates are granted. With the help from the principals of **Bernal Park Racing, LLC** we anticipate support from horses headquartered in Southern California.

It is curious that attracting horses into the state for Oregon is viewed as a negative. Southern California meets offer rewards of \$5,000 to out-of-state horses, not bred in California, with out-of-state trainers to compete at their meet at Del Mar. The presence of those horses makes it more difficult for California bred horses, particularly those displaced from Northern California to be successful at Del Mar.

In contrast, most of the Oregon horses are Cal Breds, not Kentucky Breds or Oregon Breds. Their crossing the border to participate in the HCFA meet means breeders' awards can be earned for the beleaguered owners, trainers and breeders of California horses that return from Oregon. The Northern California horsemen have fallen upon hard times, every little bit of Cal Bred awards helps.

On behalf of the HCFA, we have the financial support, we have the purses, we have the facility, we have the interest in horsemen to participate and we have a 129-year history of running exciting live horse race meet in a region of California that whole heartedly supports its live horse racing events.

It would be unfair and inequitable to shut HCFA down just so the south can harvest a 50th week of commissions generated from wagering in the north. Those wagers are built upon the foundation of goodwill generated from decades of live horse racing from Fresno to the Oregon Border on tracks like Bay Meadows, Golden Gate Fields, Solano County, Stockton, Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Pleasanton and Fresno. We can race and we want to race.

Scott Chaney
Executive Director
Page 5
April 12, 2025

I regret that I will not be in the country during the next CHRB Board Meeting. Although our Board President, Andy Titus, Racing Committee Chair, Greg Gomes, CEO Moira Kenny and I will be available to answer any and all questions you may have in advance of the next CHRB meeting. We respect your opinion and trust the right decisions shall be made regarding the HCFA request for three weeks of dates. We look forward to CHRB approval for the perpetuation of our cherished and community supported racing venue that has a long history of sustaining a segment of the California horseracing and breeding industry that cannot successfully compete with the out of state bred imports racing at Del Mar.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMES R. MORGAN, Special Counsel
Humboldt County Fair Association

JRM:pt

cc: Greg Ferraro, Chair
Oscar Gonzales, Jr., Vice Chair
Brenda Davis
Tom Hudnut
Damascus Castellanos



Cher-Ac Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria



May 1, 2025

California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Support for Horse Racing at the Humboldt County Fair

Dear Members of the California Horse Racing Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for continuing the tradition of live horse racing at the Humboldt County Fair in Ferndale. As a longstanding part of our county's culture and a vital economic driver for the fair, horse racing is more than just a sport; it is a cornerstone of our community's identity and heritage.

While I understand the current challenges facing the horse racing industry, the Humboldt County Fair Association has demonstrated both resilience and commitment to exploring options for holding a successful meet this year. In the absence of support from the California Association of Racing Fairs, the fair association is considering stepping up to manage the meet independently; a bold but necessary move to preserve a cherished tradition.

Horse racing has consistently proven to be a major attraction at the Humboldt County Fair. According to Fair Board President Andy Titus, it significantly boosts attendance and revenue across all aspects of the fair, from parking and concessions to carnival sales. In fact, after recent financial reconciliations, last year's meet even produced a six-figure profit; a remarkable feat for a rural fair in a struggling industry.

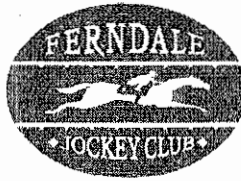
Director Greg Gomes of the Fair Association's Racing Committee has publicly expressed confidence in the fair's ability to organize and host this year's races, citing strong community interest and support. Despite the hurdles ahead, including licensing, purse funding, and logistical coordination, it is clear there is momentum and local commitment to see it through.

The deadline to apply for race dates is fast approaching, and timely approval from your board will be essential to making the 2025 meet a reality. I urge the California Horse Racing Board to support the Humboldt County Fair Association's application for a race meet license and to recognize the important role this event plays in supporting rural economies, celebrating California's agricultural and equestrian traditions, and maintaining public interest in the sport.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Garth Sundberg
Tribal Chairman
Trinidad Rancheria



P. O. Box 521 (5 to 1)
Ferndale, CA 95536

May 2, 2025

Scott Chaney, Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board (CHRB)
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95825-3216

Dear Director Chaney,

We are sending this letter to ask for your help in keeping horse racing at the 129th Humboldt County Fair alive! The Humboldt County Fair is a racing tradition nearly every year since 1870.

The California Horse Racing Board is considering canceling horse racing at our biggest tradition in the County. "The Ferndale Jockey Club" has worked effortlessly in keeping the horse track grounds clean and safe for racing. The Ferndale Jockey Club is a "fun" but serious support organization and activity continues to increase year to year. Our commitment to make track/facility improvements and support social events for the racing community with the help and support of Jockey Club volunteers. The Ferndale Jockey Club has contributed facility and track improvements over its 30 year history, providing incentives for horsemen to come to our unique venue. Below are some of our contributions:

- 2009: Renovation of the historical starting gate (Fair's annual welcome billboard).
- 2010: Renovation of the track's official starting gate.
- 2011: Painting of the horse barns.
- 2012: Funding 30% of the Club House Turn widening project.
- 2013: Updating and enlarging the Winner's Circle.
- 2014: Winner's Circle phase two and maintenance of Arlington Ave historical barns.
- 2015: Widening the backstretch and far turn of the track.
- 2016: Re-roofing of the Arlington Ave barns, phase I.
- 2017: Re-roofing of the Arlington Ave barns, phase 2.
- 2018: Re-roofing of the Arlington Ave barns, final phase and renovation of horse barns in the Quad and Assembly areas.

Recent improvements:

Cement flooring for tack rooms, new latches on stalls, gas cards, Worker's Comp, paid jockey travel, jockey incentives



P. O. Box 521 (5 to 1)
Ferndale, CA 95536

BBQ's for horsemen as well as BBQ for the past 2 years at Grants Pass, golf cart for horsemen.

Fundraiser BBQ on Memorial Day and "Save the Races" dinner for 300+ guests with live and silent auctions, raising funds for all previous and continuing improvements for horse racing in Ferndale.

Ferndale's history and commitment to California horseracing has never been stronger and can continue to offer benefits to horseraces on and off track for many more generations to come. Our historical track and location is unmatched in the industry and we continue to be the place for the "little" guy to succeed. We believe Ferndale epitomizes what Fair racing contributes to horseracing: a promotion platform for the new horse owner, trainer, and race fan (especially the family). We ask for your support in saving this tradition.

Thanks again and we'll see you at the races.

Sincerely,

Marty Polosek, President
Ann Farley, Vice President
Barbara Mogni, Secretary
Dwayne Martin, Treasurer
The Ferndale Jockey Club

Public Comment Received Regarding the Humboldt County Fair Meet

1. Please support bringing horse racing to the Humboldt County Fair in Ferndale, it's one of my absolute favorite community events of the year, and I know horse racing is a huge part of what makes the whole fair possible. If you don't allow racing you might be responsible for the Fair not being able to happen for financial reasons, which would be a huge loss for our community. I read that some people in your organization don't want it to happen because there would be a small financial loss down south, even though it's down there 50 week out of the year, and all we get up here is two week. I can't think of anything more selfish, I'm sure you losing two weeks makes no difference compared to if we lose those two weeks it might end an entire institution and tradition that is well over a century old, and benefits our entire community. Please don't make your greed be the reason it ends.

Jacquelyn Stuber
Arcata, California

2. Dear Horse Racing Board,

Please support horse racing at the Humboldt County Fair. The fair is an important asset to Humboldt County. It provides important jobs, and vitally needed revenue to the community. Horse racing at the Humboldt County Fair is not just a sport – it is a historic and cultural pillar that contributes to our local economy, supporting jobs, and bringing our community together in a truly unique way. This treasured tradition has deep roots, with a legacy that spans more than a century, making it one of California's most enduring county fair race meets. This sport is more than just a pastime – it is a vital part of rural California's identity and economy.

Sincerely,
Dan Marchetti

3. Dear California Horse Racing Board:

I am compelled to reach out to let you know how important live horse racing is to our community and to my family, as a whole. We look forward to August every year. Meeting up with old friends and making new friends. This is more than a typical sport, it's a pastime full of entertainment and it feeds our economy as well and we all know that needs to happen.

Please do what you can to support our treasured tradition, it's such a loved pastime tradition.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Amber Seaman

4. I am writing as a resident of Humboldt County and a strong supporter of the historic tradition of live horse racing at the Humboldt County Fair in Ferndale, California.

For over a century, this event has served as more than just a fairground attraction — it is a cornerstone of our local identity, economy, and community spirit. The Humboldt County Fair race meet is one of the longest-running in the state, and its cultural significance to our region cannot be overstated.

In addition to its historical value, horse racing at the fair provides meaningful economic benefits. It creates seasonal jobs, supports local businesses, and draws tourism to the region — all vital contributions to the sustainability of rural California.

I am concerned about decisions currently being made at the state level that may jeopardize the future of this event. I respectfully request your support in preserving live horse racing in Humboldt County by advocating for the continuation of fair meets and the policies and resources that make them possible.

Please help us protect this treasured tradition and ensure that the Humboldt County Fair can continue to offer the unique sense of community and celebration that horse racing brings year after year.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership and hope you will stand with Humboldt County and rural communities across Northern California.

Sincerely,
Lisa Ayers

5. My name is Ani Knight and I grew up in Ferndale, my great grandfather ran horses in Ferndale in the 30's and 40's. I was involved in racing and traveled all over the US. I met people at Saratoga, NY who spoke fondly of coming to run in Ferndale in the 70's. One of the jockeys that I knew in Colorado won his first race here. This track is so well known for being a tiny fair meet in Northern California and it deserves a chance for at least one more year of racing. It's not equitable or reasonable for everyone to turn

their back on Ferndale just to benefit someone else. Please consider voting to approve one more year, it's so important for our community.

Thank you,
Ani Knight

6. Over 168 years of Northern California cultural tradition is hanging in the wind. Horse racing at county fairs is a part of our heritage we can't afford to lose. It's historically, socially and economically vital to small communities.

We are currently facing the loss of horse racing in Humboldt County. Others like Sacramento and Santa Rosa are already bowing out, but we suspect they aren't as dependent on these events for their economy. I hope you will do everything in your power to protect and promote horse racing here.

Canceling small community economic contributors like horse racing is going to hit us hard in already hard times. We sure would appreciate your support. This is critical to Humboldt County's economy.

Kathy Major
Ferndale, CA

7. Dear Racing Board,

You can't imagine how important the ponies are to our summer County Fair. Pounding down the home stretch with that view from the grandstands of the hills in the background is one of the highlights of my year, and the same for thousands of others.

Please assign racing dates or otherwise facilitate our meet.

Thanks,
David Callow, McKinleyville, California

8. This is to register my staunch opposition to the "sport" of horse racing, and especially in my home in Humboldt County, where I have lived for 65 of my 73 years. How anyone can cheer and celebrate an activity that all too often leads to the tragic death of horses for nothing more than human entertainment is beyond me. Please end this cruel and exploitative industry.

Karen Suiker

9. Mr. Castellanos and Mr. Stern,

Fairs like Ferndale have proved vital to Northern California horse racing. They introduce new fans to this great sport, give trainers and owners of less successful, smaller stables during the year an opportunity to get back on their feet financially, continue the long-standing tradition of the Northern California summer circuit and provide a major contribution to the local economy. In short, the Humboldt Fair (Ferndale has hosted 128 years of horse racing) has been a cherished tradition that celebrates horse racing along with agriculture and entertainment, and become a cultural pillar for the community.

Ferndale is a town of approximately 1,700, but more than 5,000 fans have regularly packed the Humboldt track during summer racing programs. It's one of the few race tracks in the nation that attracts more fans than the population of the host town. Arguably, Ferndale has been the most popular stop on the Nor Cal summer fair circuit. It's definitely been number one in local media coverage, and boasts the only radio coverage with post-race shows in past years on an ESPN affiliate.

Horse racing is promoted to the max, and fans have shown their appreciation.

Art Sherman, who trained 2014 Kentucky Derby winner and two-time Horse of the Year California Chrome, was a special 2018 guest of the Humboldt Fair, and has expressed his love for Ferndale. Jay Hovdey and Jay Privman, both members of the Joe Hirsch Media Roll of Honor at the National Racing Hall of Fame, have also been special guests of the Humboldt Fair and would "second" Art Sherman's admiration for Ferndale racing. Hovdey's wife, Julie Krone, the first female jockey to win a Triple Crown race and a Hall of Fame member, also crossed off a bucket list wish by accompanying her husband on that 2003 Ferndale visit. Doug O'Neill showed his support for "Racing in the Redwoods" by shipping Mucino north to win last year's \$50,000 Humboldt Marathon contested at 1-5/8 miles.

Frank Mirahmadi, current announcer at Santa Anita and Saratoga tracks, and Chris Griffin, the current Aqueduct (NY) race announcer, both called Ferndale races for several seasons can echo their love for Humboldt Fair racing and the massive support of the fans. Guy Fieri, Emmy Award-winning media personality and restaurateur, has been one of the biggest financial supporters of the Humboldt Fair in the town where he sold pretzels as a

youngster. Bo Goldman, a two-time Oscar award-winning screen writer (One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and Shoot The Moon), was a regular at the Ferndale mutual windows during August meets.

Stars of horse racing, TV and movies have shown their support for Humboldt Fair horse racing along with the common fan.

Now, Ferndale has become the last hope to keep horse racing alive in Northern California. And all over the tug-of-war for simulcast revenue during just a three-week span in late August and early September.

Many trainers and backstretch work force have had their lives uprooted and forced to move to Southern California where their race horses have quickly found they are severely overmatched and not competitive. Races that were at first restricted to just Nor Cal thoroughbreds now have clauses in the conditions that "open" races up to So Cal horses.

Want some examples of how prominent Nor Cal trainers are doing at Santa Anita (through April 27th): Bill McLean 3 wins-57 starts; Isidro Tamayo (a multiple trainer champ at Golden Gate Fields and on the Fairs) 4-45; Samuel Calvario 1-43; Manual Badilla 2-26; Marcia Stortz 2-29; Victor Trujillo 0-22; Blaine Wright 1-16; Faith Taylor 1-21; D Wayne Baker 1-14; Sergio Ledezma 1-14.

Many of those trainers along with several others have expressed interest in sending their horses north for a possible Humboldt meet where their stock would relish the "drop in class." Along with an large import of horses from Oregon there would be enough backstretch visitors to hold a seven-day Humboldt meet.

Ferndale has become the last hope to keep horse racing, which dates back to 1858 in Northern California, alive. Vote to deny the Humboldt County Fair and you probably lose the sport for good in Northern California. There will most likely not be racing in 2026 in Northern California—the horses will be gone.

Please keep horse racing alive in Northern California by voting to support dates for the Humboldt County Fair. Fans want to pack the Ferndale stands again and Northern California does not want this great sport extinguished.

Thank you, Ellis Davis

(I have worked for the Daily Racing Form and Equibase as a chart caller, etc. for 47 years, 43 of which have included work at the Humboldt County Fair. I was first sent to Ferndale in 1980 and have only missed two years due to cancer surgeries. The last 27 years I have also had the privilege to handle duties as the racing publicist for the Humboldt Fair. In addition, I put together a pair of Nor Cal summer fair media guides that updated racing information for CARF. I have seen first hand the importance the Humboldt Fair plays in the community, especially horse racing which has received tremendous support from fans locally and afar).

11. The Humboldt County Fair horse racing has been a community event for 128 years. A event where friends can rekindle old memories and share friendships with each other. I have attended this fair for sixty straight years . I may have missed one year. I now travel from out of state to attend the fair every year. This wonderful community event needs to continue as there are very few events in Humboldt County that match the fairs enthusiasm . Please allow the Fair board dates for racing if they pursue a meet this August.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely Greg Sarvinski

12. Just wanted to send a quick email about how much horse racing means to Humboldt county, and someone like myself that comes up every year for the horse races. Please give Bernal group a chance to start nor cal racing up again, this will help towards that to have this meet. There will be plenty of horses coming to this meet, once these dates are approved then planning for those dates can start. Look forward to 2025 Humboldt County dates being approved next week, and the start of a new era of racing in the north through Bernal racing. Thank you Sincerely TB

13. Dear CHRB,

I am writing this to support the Humboldt County Fair's (HCF) application for racing dates 2025. The HCF race meet is essential for CA and OR horsemen, (owners, breeders, trainers, grooms) to continue to participate in racing. Horses raised in the north are ready to compete and the HCF is one of the nicest, most well-run operations going. Racing is essential for the HCF operators to be successful. The mission statement for CHRB is clear. • Ensure the viability of CA horse racing • Regulating pari-mutual wagering • Promoting horse racing • Breeding • Wagering opportunities CHRB needs to approve the racing dates as requested or do everything in their power to make clear what is lacking. Much too much favoritism has been shown to rich operators in the south to run the northern races into the ground.

If the HCF application was incomplete, it is imperative for the HRB to provide clear directions to allow the HCF to be successful in getting dates.

The issue of wagering is most concerning as the fairs have been cut out of wagering from operators like TVG (Fanduel). In the early days of my participation in horse racing, I could watch all the fairs on TVG and bet as well. This revenue source should be brought back to support northern CA racing. Not letting Pleasanton get the exposure and revenue from this type of wagering, most likely caused the operation to lose money. How has CHRB allowed this to happen? Providing wagering opportunities is in the mission statement.

If you want to promote breeding in CA you must approve race dates in the north. The idea that all the northern horses can run in the south seems to have failed. CA horse racing needs you to step up and live up to your mission statement. Work with the folks who are offering to bankroll racing meets, help them, help us. Do not yield to the big money folks whose only mission is the end horse racing all together.

Sincerely,

Catherine Bumgardner Pool

Cc: Sen McGuire