

State Horse Council To Represent Owners

CARLISLE (Cumberland) — Facing an insurance crisis, concerned about the possible introduction of detrimental legislation and feeling a lack of recognition for the horse industry's contributions to the state, Pennsylvania breeders, trainers, farriers, horse owners and other interested parties have been holding a series of

meetings to organize a group that will give them statewide representation and a unified voice to express their concerns. The group, to be incorporated as the Pennsylvania Equine Council, is expected to operate as a clearinghouse for information for members of the Pennsylvania equine industry and to present the industry's views

both to legislators and to others outside of the industry.

The industry is broadly based throughout the state. Research conducted in 1985 by the American Horse Council, the national trade organization, showed that the Pennsylvania equine industry's contribution to the Gross National Product was \$614 mil-

lion, annually and placed Pennsylvania as the sixth highest equine related GNP contributor state in the nation. It is important to note that the figure did not include monies generated by the horse racing segment. Current estimates indicate the state's GNP figure will exceed \$700 million in 1989.

Intent upon representing the

entire Pennsylvania equine community, the new council is aggressively attracting members from many different segments of the industry who represent a large cross section of disciplines and breeds. The officers and board of directors for the organization include farriers, veterinarians, tack shop owners and breeders, along with pleasure, show, draft horse and race horse owners.

The council named several issues it intends to include among its priorities. Tentatively scheduled to be among its first projects are: finding ways to increase the availability of liability insurance, which currently is both scarce and costly; lobbying for recognition by state law-makers that horse-keeping be categorized as agricultural, since the horse industry is foreclosed from tax and regulatory benefits afforded other members of the agricultural community; working for the construction, preservation and deregulation of land for trails; and dissemination of educational information on a wide range of topics of interest to both members of the industry and the general public. The council expects to be affiliated with the American Horse Council and to work closely with that national trade group in its endeavors to protect and promote horse ownership.

Temporary officers and board members, selected by the council, are in the final process of drafting a constitution and by-laws. Temporary officers are Martin Kenny, Holtwood, president; Joe Dickey, Carlisle, vice president; Melanie Holdsworth, Noxen, secretary; and C. Edward Rogers Jr., Mechanicsburg, treasurer.

The council will begin accepting members within the next few months and has already assembled a roster of nearly 15,000 horse owners from which it expects to draw support. Because they represent the largest percentage of horsemen in the state, individuals who currently have no affiliation with a nationally recognized registry, club, or association are being asked to contact the council so that they may have a voice in council activities. For more information, clubs or organizations, tack shop owners, and businesses dealing with the equine industry also are being urged to submit their names and addresses. To be placed on the council's mailing list, contact Joe Dickey by phone at (717) 766-9088, or by mail c/o Rising Star Farm, Box 206, R.D. #8, Carlisle, PA 17013.



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