

Shenandoah County Agricultural Foundation Is Granted Limited License To Host Harness Racing At Shenandoah Downs This Fall

The Virginia Racing Commission (VRC) held its monthly meeting Thursday August 17th in downtown Richmond, and the session provided good news for harness horsemen and fans.

The Shenandoah County Agricultural Foundation, a new 501(c)(3) organization, was granted a limited license to host the Shenandoah Downs pari-mutuel fall race meet this year at the Fairgrounds in Woodstock. Approval of this measure was unanimous from the VRC commissioners. The Foundation has contracted with the Virginia Equine Alliance (VEA) to operate the meet and the Virginia Harness Horse Association (VHHA) will put up purse money. The second annual season will run every Saturday & Sunday from September 16 - October 15.

Upgrades this year include an expansion of the "crows nest" (where judges, TV crew, chart caller and announcer are based), expanded TV/radio presence in the race office and barn area, a number of hot water stations for horses, a new layout for the barns, and a new 1200 square foot washroom with bathrooms/showers in the backstretch. "The horsemen have been very supportive and are excited to be coming back," said VEA Executive Director Jeb Hannum.

New concrete flooring was added in the main grandstand betting area to give fans a better experience as well. The Shenandoah Downs simulcast signal will be available in both Richmond OTB's for the first time --- at Ponies & Pints downtown and at Breakers Sports Grille in the west end. Races will also be streamed free via the shenandoahdowns.com website.

The 100th edition of the Shenandoah County Fair precedes the meet and begins Friday August 25th. Four days of harness racing (non-betting) will again take place from August 30th - September 2nd.

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