

An Ever More Complicated Industry



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Letter from the President

At the risk of stating the obvious, when TOC became the official representative of California Thoroughbred horsemen in 1995, it was a far less complicated industry than it has become.

The core responsibilities then transferred from the California HBPA included the negotiation of contracts with each of the racing associations and fairs, the provision of consent under the Interstate Horseracing Act, the monitoring of legislation impacting racing, regulatory matters before the CHRB, and service of the boards of the Northern and Southern California off-track wagering corporations – NCOTWinc and SCOTWinc – and for California Horse Racing Information Management System (“CHRIMS”).

In the ensuing years, TOC’s responsibilities increased substantially as the business evolved; altered forever by the adoption of “new” technologies, and the recognition of competitive realities. While still fulfilling the same duties it willingly accepted in 1995, the organization plays a much more vital role, cooperatively overseeing many of the behind-the-scenes, day-to-day programs that enable California racing and wagering to function essentially around the clock, nearly year ‘round.

Today, TOC directors and staff not only serve on the board of the four corporations listed above, they also chair, co-chair, or serve as un-paid executives and staff for the: California Thoroughbred Business League (workers’ comp); California Horsemen’s Safety Alliance (workers’ comp insurance administration and related safety programs/initiatives); California Jockeys Welfare Corporation (oversight of statutory health, vision, dental, disability, and life insurance programs for jockeys); Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (national program); Thoroughbred Horsemen’s Group (a national association of 17 horsemen’s groups cooperatively working to increase horsemen’s share of simulcast revenues); NTRA – National Thoroughbred Racing Association; California Marketing Committee (developers and managers of Calracing.com and a host of other programs intended to strategically market and promote California racing); the Stabling & Vanning Committees for both Northern and Southern California; and, CARMA – California Retirement Management Account (non-profit dedicated to developing means to fund retraining, rehabilitation, and retirement facilities for former California racehorses).

Internally, TOC maintains six committees that meet regularly to provide staff with policy guidance and to prioritize strategic goals. Those committees include: Medication & Racing Integrity; Legislative Affairs; Owners/Industry Relations; Racing Affairs, (Northern & Southern California); Finance and Insurance; and, an Executive Committee that meets weekly to address issues requiring immediate attention and response.

All of these entities, programs, and committees are served by a full-time staff of only seven. In my opinion, that’s simply amazing, especially considering the staff size of our track partners. Unlike track representatives, TOC directors and staff never enjoy an “off-season.” The organization is expected to, and does, maintain a presence at every major Thoroughbred racing association running live in the state, year round, both North and South. We are part of the contractual and licensing processes for each meet, including the tracking of handle, purse, and simulcast revenues in and out-of-state. TOC also remains integral to the resolution of legislative, regulatory, financial, ADW, track surface, integrity, and other strategic issues that impact Thoroughbred owners’ interests statewide, nationally, and internationally.

Believe it or not, this is only a partial list – very partial at that – of what it is that TOC does for its members every day of the year, year after year, on essentially the same budget it had 13 years ago! There are few service organizations that shoulder as much responsibility, or ask of their staff, as much as does TOC.

Don’t be fooled by anyone who says differently; the people who volunteer on its Board, and who work for the organization, largely do so not for financial rewards, but because – like you – they love the horse, the industry, and most importantly, the people in racing!