

## Indiana Commission Begins "Simplified" Licensing Process for Owners

In a move that may be unprecedented in the racing industry, the Indiana Horse Racing Commission has instituted a simplified licensing process for owners, according to its Executive Director, Joe Gorajec. The new process will allow owners renewing their license to complete the process, including receiving a new photo I.D. badge, without visiting the track and at absolutely no cost.

Recent technological upgrades in the Commission's licensing department have made this program possible. The Indiana Horse Racing Commission began digitizing the photographs of licensees in 1997. Since that time, the Commission has accumulated an inventory of 6,100 digitized photographs in its database, of which over 2,000 are of owners. The Commission has not charged licensing fees since 1996.

"The combination of a large inventory of digitized photographs and free-of-charge licensing has allowed us to design this unique program," Gorajec stated. Indiana's new process will dovetail well with the new RCI Multi-Jurisdiction License Application for Owners. Starting in 1999, an owner can take the application off the RCI web site, complete it, fax it, and the process is complete. If the owner has a digitized photo on file, the

Commission will mail them their 1999 I.D. badge. If the owner does not have a photo on file, he or she will still be considered licensed. However, an initial visit to the track will be necessary to get a photo on file.

"The licensing program in Indiana was not designed to raise revenue. Its sole purpose is to protect the integrity of the sport. We are glad we can offer owners such a streamlined process without compromising the effectiveness of the program," Gorajec concluded.

Fingerprint cards will still need to be filed once every five years. However, the Commission will accept fingerprints submitted on the RCI fingerprint card and on file in the RCI database. As in the past, owners who are licensed in more than that category (example: owner/trainer) will need to be present at the track to complete the licensing process.

For further information, contact Joe Gorajec at (317) 233-3119.

Comments from Industry leaders:

*Stanley F. Bergstein, Executive Vice President, Harness Track of America* - "The Indiana Racing Commission has come up with another triumph of common sense. First they did away with a state license fee, and now-thanks to full utilization of technology-they have taken licensing to the living room. Everyone in racing should send them a thank you note. This is a dramatic and tremendously significant move likely to impact all licensing of the future."

*Tony Chamblin, President and CEO, Association of Racing Commissioners International* - "Owners are the lifeblood of our industry. Anything regulators can do to streamline the licensing process without sacrificing integrity deserves our support and applause."

*Tim Smith, President and Commissioner, National Thoroughbred Racing*

*Association* - "Along with higher purses and lower taxes, the one goal that I am asked about most frequently by owners is uniform licensing. The Indiana Horse Racing Commission is to be congratulated for this step towards that ultimate goal."

*Fred J. Noe, Executive Vice President, United States Trotting Association* - "The frustration expressed to the USTA by owners about the old licensing process have been frequent, vocal, and unfortunately justified. This is a tremendous step forward."

*Ed Martin, Jr., Chairman, Indiana Thoroughbred Breed Development Advisory Committee* - "Owners will love this new process. My hope is that it will serve as a model for other jurisdictions to emulate."

*Nat Hill, IV, member, Indiana Standardbred Breed Development Advisory Committee* - "This may be the first time ever that a government agency has actually made things easier for horsemen. Race horse owners will certainly appreciate avoiding the hassle of on-track licensing."