

Statement from Hawthorne Race Course
Regarding Standardbred Yearling Sales & 2023 Racing



As yearling sales approach, we hope that Illinois horsemen are as optimistic about the future of harness racing as we are. We certainly recognize the challenges that horsemen continue to endure as our industry goes through an unprecedented transformation here in Illinois. The closure of Arlington Park added additional pressures on harness horsemen by displacing thoroughbred horsemen, but it also showcased how the remaining stakeholders in Illinois racing can, and must, work together. We thank you for that cooperation and your trust in Hawthorne to host racing for both breeds in the best ways possible.

The IHHA and Hawthorne have been working together for over 20 years to fundamentally change the economic model of Illinois racing. While the transition to developing casino-supported racing has been slower than anticipated, we continue to make vital progress in establishing a new and enduring foundation on which to rebuild our industry, together. Pending continued approvals by the Illinois Gaming Board, we are very excited to begin the next phases of our development of Hawthorne Casino & Race Course.

Hawthorne remains fully committed to harness racing and we are currently developing a schedule for 2023 that we believe will provide lucrative opportunities for IHHA members with maximized purses, particularly for 2-year-olds. The upsurge in ICF foals over the past few years and the increase in the Illinois standardbred population is further evidence that our industry is poised for an historic rejuvenation. Together we will truly elevate the prestige of Illinois racing and reestablish a thriving business for trainers, owners and breeders.