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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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**PLEASANTON: TRADITIONAL CHARM WITH
ALL THE MODERN CONVENIENCES**

PLEASANTON, CA – The California Horse Racing Board will conduct its regular monthly meeting June 30 in Pleasanton, home of the oldest one-mile racetrack in America.

Highlighting the meeting agenda will be consideration of a revised rule for TCO2 testing, an update on the jockey weights issue, and a report on the use of microchip technology for the identification of racehorses.

The full agenda for this and other CHRB meetings can be viewed at the CHRB official Internet site: <http://www.chrb.ca.gov>

California racing commissioners won't exactly be camping out when they visit the once sleepy little town of Pleasanton in conjunction with the start of the Alameda County Fair meet.

Sure, once upon a time it was an area of secluded valleys, far removed from the fast pace of nearby cities like Oakland and San Jose. But beginning in the 1960s, Bay Area folks discovered much more affordable housing beyond the Hayward hills, and many decided that a 30 or 40-mile drive to work – a staggering commute for its time – really wasn't all that bad.

Almost overnight, small towns like Dublin and San Ramon became modern bedroom communities. Retail businesses soon followed, then larger corporations, which brought jobs to the Tri-Valley. The population has more than doubled in the last 20 years alone.

And Pleasanton, yes, it has grown as well – from a population of 35,000 in 1980 to more than 65,000 in 2003. High-tech companies like Oracle, Applied Biosystems, and e-Loan moved into town. And nowadays, the average three-bedroom home goes for about \$830,000.

All that being said, Pleasanton still has an old-fashioned feel to it. Main Street remains quaint. There are concerts in Wayside Park. And despite newer, fancier restaurants, the old Pleasanton Hotel, with its Victorian charm, is still the place where locals prefer to hold their wedding banquets and retirement dinners. The City's official website boasts of Pleasanton's "ability to grow in population while retaining the spirit and personal interrelationships of a small town."

The annual centerpiece to this provincial charm is the Alameda County Fair, a two-week celebration of food, fun, livestock, art, and horse racing on the oldest racing oval in the United States, dating back to 1858, when one Don Refugio Bernal built a racetrack in order to run his stable against

others in the Tri-Valley for private, head-to-head wagers. Improvements were made over the years. The oval was enlarged in 1874 from a half-mile to a mile; pari-mutuel wagering came along in 1939; they also built a grandstand in 1939, then after that burned down, they built another in 1941.

And, wrote Chuck Dybdal in an article for *Diablo Magazine*, Pleasanton is where the legendary Seabiscuit lived – where owner “Charles Howard built a special barn for his star horse and used the track for training.”

Racing today may be modernized with sophisticated betting terminals, television monitors, simulcast wagering, and large-screen matrix boards, but some things don’t change in Pleasanton. Picnics are still popular with fans, who bring bags of food, ice chests, blankets, and folding chairs when enjoying an afternoon of racing.

The annual fair meet is a big deal, something to mark on the calendar. Some locals and residents of nearby Livermore who attend the races every summer would never dream of going to Bay Meadows or Golden Gate Field – less than an hour away. Fair racing takes the sport to the public in a unique manner. The thrill and excitement of concerts, carnival rides, special food items, and exhibits all combine to provide a one-of-a-kind experience in communities like Pleasanton, Stockton, Santa Rosa, Vallejo, Fresno, and Ferndale.

“We look forward to welcoming nearly 400,000 guests to this year’s Alameda County Fair in Pleasanton,” said Fair CEO Rick K. Pickering. “We invite them to “Come Out And Play” with us as we celebrate the competitive spirit of Alameda County. That spirit is alive and well in our live horse race meet.”

CHRB Chairman John Harris added, “I have enjoyed the races at Pleasanton for 40 years and have fond memories of it. The grandstand used to be packed on weekends. We won two stakes there one day with Blazing Skies and Big Jess, both trained by Anna Wallen back in the early 1970’s. The track and town have a unique feel, and I’m glad the Horse Racing Board will be meeting there on the 30th.”

Back to the meeting agenda, the proposed TCO2 regulation includes a new split sample provision unique to the testing process for excess alkalizing agents. The TCO2 rule adopted in January contained no such provision, which would allow horse owners to request the pre-race collection of split samples and have them tested at their own expense. The rule is contingent upon the passage of enabling legislation.

The update on jockey weights pertains to the Board’s determination in April to endorse a scale of weights developed nationally by racing associations and horsemen, while the industry conducts a thorough study of various health issues relating to jockey weights.

A representative of the Jockey Club will report on the current state of microchip technology. The Board hopes to add microchips to the existing methods of horse identification, which include lip tattoos and individual markings.

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