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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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**CHRB UTILIZING NEW FINGERPRINT TECHNOLOGY**

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Horse Racing Board has introduced new technology to its licensing process designed to quickly identify those applicants who are disqualified from obtaining licenses and prevent them from participating in horse racing.

Using new fingerprint-scanning technology that instantly transmits digitized information to computers at the California Department of Justice (DOJ), the CHRB now obtains the criminal histories of applicants in a matter of hours instead of the months it routinely took to receive the same information when everything was done manually.

Under the old system, applicants used ink to roll their fingerprints onto cards, which were then mailed to DOJ, where someone had to process the cards through their system, and then mail the results back to the CHRB. Depending on the backlog at DOJ, this process could take three to six months – in rare instances even longer.

The CHRB processes more than 4,000 new license applications each year in 14 licensing categories, including horse owners, trainers, grooms, jockeys, pari-mutuel employees, and racing officials. Each new applicant is required to list any convictions on the application. The fingerprints are taken and processed in order to obtain criminal histories from the national database and confirm that the information provided on the application is correct. Applicants are provided with temporary licenses pending the background check. If the information from DOJ indicates a disqualifying conviction, the temporary license is immediately revoked.

In the past, individuals were able to participate in horse racing for months using the temporary license, and the longer they participated, the more difficult it was to extract them from the industry when it was determined they had falsified their applications. By then, horse owners may have acquired large stables that could involve multiple partnerships.

CHRB Assistant Executive Director Roy Minami began laying the groundwork last year for obtaining and utilizing the new fingerprint-scanning technology, then when Ingrid Fermin became CHRB director in January, she encouraged the staff to implement the new Live Scan System as quickly as possible. CHRB Chief Information Officer Mory Atashkar took personal responsibility for integrating the fingerprint-scanning program into the CHRB's own, secure network, and putting the system through a rigorous testing process before it was finally introduced this month at all CHRB licensing facilities.

“It is the same system that Homeland Security is using to check visitors coming to this country,” explained Atashkar, “as well as law enforcement agencies, port authorities, and many other government agencies. Eventually everyone will need to have this capability because at some point DOJ is not going to accept the manual cards any longer.”

Under the new system, applicants follow prompts on a laptop computer screen to place their fingers on a scanning device. Assisted by CHRB license technicians, applicants roll their fingers across the image-capturing device, one by one, and the computer indicates immediately whether the fingerprints are readable.

CHRB Chief Investigator Frank Moore said the new system is a great improvement over the manual process because “we don’t want people of questionable character involved in horse racing. By that I mean people with prior convictions for drugs, illegal gambling, fraud, and theft – the types of crimes that disqualify an applicant from participating in horse racing. The sooner we can identify them and keep them out of our industry, the better.”

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