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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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**DEL MAR TAKES INITIAL STEP FOR POLYTRACK**

DEL MAR, CA – Executives with the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, joined by industry representatives and the chairman of the California Horse Racing Board, made a presentation to the 22<sup>nd</sup> District Agricultural Association during a district board meeting Tuesday regarding the installation of Polytrack at the popular seaside racetrack, and though they stopped short of allocating funds for the project, the district board members responded positively by agreeing to submit the plan to the State Coastal Commission for consideration.

DMTC President Joseph Harper and Vice President Craig Fravel made the presentation to the district board, which owns and operates the Del Mar fairgrounds and leases the facility to DMTC for its annual summer race meet. Joining them in the presentation were Drew Couto, president of the Thoroughbred Owners of California; Ed Halpern, executive director of the California Thoroughbred Trainers; Richard Shapiro, chairman of the CHRB; trainers Richard Mandella and Howard Zucker, the past and current chairmen of the thoroughbred horsemen's Track Safety Committee, and two prominent veterinarians with strong credentials in the prevention of injuries to horses, Dr. Gregory Ferraro and Dr. Rick Arthur,

Citing encouraging results in Kentucky and Europe where Polytrack already is in use, the speakers testified that Polytrack should help reduce injuries among racehorses, which was the theme of a similar presentation to the CHRB in December. At that earlier December 1 meeting, the racing commissioners, including Shapiro, vowed to work with the industry on track safety issues, and Shapiro's appearance before the district board on Tuesday was part of that effort.

"My impression was the district is inclined in a positive light to see if Polytrack could be installed there," explained Shapiro. "While I wish it could be done as early as this year, the reality is that given all of the required steps, including environmental approval by the Coastal Commission, it probably would not be accomplished before the start of the Del Mar 2007 season.

"Everyone in the industry supports this effort. We all view it as critical to the health and safety of horses, jockeys, and other racing participants. With Polytrack, we expect horses to sustain fewer injuries than on traditional dirt surfaces. There would be more consistency in the surface from day to day and from track to track when Polytrack is installed at other facilities. And with fewer horses going to the sidelines, it should help increase the size of our fields."

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