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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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INGRID FERMIN SUBMITS RESIGNATION

SACRAMENTO, CA – Ingrid Fermin, executive director of the California Horse Racing Board, has submitted her resignation effective January 7, 2008, which will be the date of her third-year anniversary as chief executive for the State agency that regulates horse racing.

After reviewing Fermin's job performance, the racing commissioners gave her high marks and expressed confidence in her ability to continue leading the CHRB. However, they did require that she relocate her office to CHRB headquarters in Sacramento. Fermin resides in Del Mar and works primarily out of an office located at the Del Mar Race Track. She commutes regularly to Sacramento and elsewhere as needed.

"I initially committed myself to this position for a period of three to five years," Fermin wrote in her October 24 letter of resignation mailed to CHRB Chairman Richard B. Shapiro and the other six racing commissioners. "It was agreed that I would maintain a field office in Southern California while being present in Sacramento as needed. In order to comply with the Board's current wishes, that the executive director be based in Sacramento, it would be necessary for me to relocate. I'm sure that each of you will understand when I indicate that I am unwilling to do that.

"Please be assured that I intend to remain active during my remaining months as the executive director and I am committed to assisting in a smooth transition to the next appointee."

Chairman Shapiro accepted with regret the letter of resignation, while acknowledging Fermin's accomplishments and contributions during her nearly three years as chief executive.

"In recent years the CHRB has taken monumental steps forward to increase transparency and protect the integrity of horse racing in California," said the chairman. "We instituted new training programs for stewards and investigators, adopted new rules for enforcement and consistency of penalties, sponsored legislation that will permit the faster and fairer adjudication of cases, increased surveillance in our stable areas, and instituted new testing procedures, most significantly out-of-competition testing. The Board also transferred all primary testing to the Ken Maddy Laboratory at UC Davis. And we hired highly qualified professional staff at nearly all key positions.

"Ingrid has played an integral role in all of these accomplishments, and it has been a pleasure to work with her over the last three years. I both regret and understand her decision not to relocate to Sacramento. I hope she will stay involved in horse racing in California."

Other Board members voiced similar appreciation for Fermin's work with the Board.

Vice Chairman John Harris: "I have much enjoyed working with Ingrid during her tenure as executive director. She has brought professionalism and dedication to the job. I am sorry that she is not able to relocate to our home offices in Sacramento. I wish her well in all future endeavors."

Commissioner Marie Moretti: "I wish to personally thank Ingrid for her years of service and her dedication to the horse-racing industry. She has made a very positive difference. She has earned my respect for her steadfast nature and professional integrity."

Commissioner Jessie Choper: "Ingrid Fermin's overall knowledge of horse racing and her specific knowledge of the California industry are exceptionally valuable and will be hard to duplicate."

Commissioner John Andreini: "Ingrid is a very, very competent person. She certainly knows the industry inside and out. It is unfortunate that she could not run the office from Sacramento. I thank her for her many years of excellent work as a steward and most recently as executive director."

Commissioner Jerry Moss: "Her fortitude and dedication were commendable during a period of great change in our industry. As a former steward, she also brought practical knowledge, which helped us in many important areas."

Speaking for the CHRB staff, Richard Bon Smith, assistant executive director, said, "We are sad to see Ingrid go. She has provided the kind of courageous, steadfast leadership that an organization needs to survive in tough times. For myself, I'm honored to have served under her and to have received the industry knowledge and insights that she has been able to impart in the year I have been with the Board."

Chairman Shapiro will be appointing a selection committee of the Board to screen candidates for the position of executive director.

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