



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DPSCS To Dedicate Rescue Farm for Retired Racehorses Thursday, May 14 at 10 a.m. on Slacks Rd. in Sykesville

Partnership with Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation

Inmates Built the Barn and Will Care For the Horses

TOWSON, MD (May 12, 2009)---Maryland will make a bold and unique statement in the restorative justice arena on May 14, when the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and its Division of Correction (DOC) cut the ribbon on a rescue farm for retired thoroughbred racehorses. The Second Chances Farm is a partnership between DPSCS and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, whose mission is to provide a safe haven for horses facing an uncertain future because their racing days are over.



The farm is located on DPSCS property adjacent to the Police and Correctional Training Commissions, which operate the training academies for law enforcement and correctional officers. It's located on Slacks Road off Maryland Route 32 in Sykesville on the grounds of the former Springfield State Hospital.

The 27-acre site, including barn and fencing, was extensively renovated by inmates in the Maryland DOC Pre-Release System, and inmates will care for the horses. The first three horses arrived on the property today. Eventually, the farm will be expanded to care for between 30 and 40 retired racehorses.



“This is just an exceptional example of inmates paying society back while learning skills that require not only craftsmanship, but patience and compassion,” says DPSCS Secretary Gary Maynard, who brought the idea to the attention of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF), which eagerly accepted the partnership. This is the second such farm Secretary Maynard has opened with TRF, the first being in Iowa when he headed their correctional system.



The horse farm is just the latest in an impressive and ever-growing list of inmate efforts that allow for community improvements and municipal projects that are the talk of the town from the mountains to the shore. There are inmate-built oyster spat cages helping to restore the Chesapeake's oyster population; visitor centers renovated in mountainside state parks; veterans' cemeteries restored by inmates who are military veterans themselves; and tens of thousands of trees planted all over Maryland, just to name a few.

All of these projects fit into the “restorative justice” model: helping inmates to give something back to society, at the same time providing labor that local towns and communities could never afford, to finish projects they could otherwise never begin.

The inmates involved are all minimum-security or pre-release-level men who are nearing their release dates. Some have actually been transferred from one region of the state to another, in order to finish projects they started, such as the inmates who have been growing fragile Chesapeake Bay grasses in a Western Maryland greenhouse, and who will soon plant those grasses on Bay islands.

Members of the media are invited to the ribbon-cutting, and may speak with DPSCS Secretary Maynard, DOC leaders, Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation officials, and inmate workers.



--- Additional Photos Below---



Before Restoration



After Restoration

Grand Opening/ Ribbon Cutting Ceremony May 14, 2009



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