

PHASE ONE OF SOUTH CAROLINA EQUINE CENTER UNDER CONTRACT

Members of The South Carolina Equine Promotion Foundation announce the signing of a contract to purchase the former Camden Equestrian Center pending approval of a satisfactory management contract between Kershaw County and the Foundation. The location near I 20 is ideal and this phase will become a permanent part of the overall plan which calls for additional expansion to attract a national as well as international audience. This action moves the overall plan to locate a new South Carolina Equine Center in Kershaw County ahead by at least three years allowing scheduling of events in this calendar year, bringing lost competitors and tourist back to our area. The property has been favorably studied by internationally recognized firm Gralla Architects, retained to undertake the Master Plan.

Laura Thiel Shull, Chairman of the Foundation says: "This quantum leap would not have been possible without the encouraging support and leadership of our legislators, Laurie Funderburke, Vincent Sheheen, Jay Lucas, and Joel Lourie. William Cotty, now retired also moved this process forward. In addition, excellent guidance has been constant from the Camden City Council, Kershaw County Council and The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Finally, acquiring this phase would not have been possible without the support of our South Carolina Electric Cooperatives. The leadership of Herb Leaird and the Board of Black River Electric Cooperative, and Bill Hart with Fairfield Electric Cooperative has been outstanding. We believe in our product. It is rewarding to have all these alliances created for a great economic development project. In a tough economic environment, it illustrates the best in public/private partnerships. "

These partnerships have been illustrated in the first planning grant from SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism which was matched by private dollars and both the City and County. From that, all planning and engineering studies will be funded. It is anticipated that the County will own the property and the Foundation will operate the facility. This mirrors the operation of Springdale Race Course which is owned by the State of South Carolina and managed by the Carolina Cup Racing Association.

Kershaw County is well recognized as a high per capita horse population county and has an international reputation in racing circles. Much used show and event facilities such as Garrison Arena in Clemson exist, but none in the middle of the state to service the I95, I26 and I20

corridors. The existing facilities are able to host only single events, whereas the concept for the South Carolina Equine Center, when built out, calls for multi event venues and the building of an indoor coliseum. Kershaw County has an existing equine economic cluster with a skilled work force in place. This cluster will grow through tourism and inward migration to an identified equine area. Long term economic impact will benefit surrounding counties and keep resultant dollars circulating within state borders.

For further information contact Hope Cooper, SCEPF Secretary at 803 432 6513.

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