

# MHC UPDATE

mdhorsecouncil.org

## Maryland Horse People: RAISE YOUR VOICE!

by Jane Seigler

USDF Silver Medalist & VP, Maryland Horse Council - seigler.jane@gmail.com

Anyone with access to a media outlet these days is well aware that politics keeps getting stranger and stranger, and that many politicians are seriously in need of adult supervision. As we put this summer's oppressive heat behind us and dive back into the autumn riding, driving, breaking, training, showing, etc., season, it's easy to lose sight

of the fact that winter, and the next session of the Maryland legislature, is just around the corner. Maryland's legislature meets for just three months (roughly mid-January to mid-April) each year, but during that time literally thousands of new laws are proposed. In the press of that schedule many worthy initiatives never see the light of day, and some that shouldn't, do. But one thing is certain: during those hectic three months the historic halls of the Annapolis statehouse and legislative offices are seething with representatives of every interest imaginable. And the reality is—rightly or wrongly—those who speak up get heard, and those who speak up with the strongest voice get heard most clearly.

It becomes imperative that someone keep an eye on what potentially detrimental things the legislature is considering, what potentially beneficial things have been proposed but are "dying on the vine," and what potentially beneficial things could be proposed that haven't been. Who is that "someone" for Maryland horse people? The Maryland Horse Council! The Horse Council is a non-profit, all volunteer organization, whose mission is to represent the interests of all Maryland horse people to the state legislature. Believe it or not, the legislature sees numerous bills

each year that have a direct or indirect effect on Maryland's horse people. In recent years, we have seen bills relating to: expanding the sales tax to cover services, e.g., boarding and training; helmet requirements for riders; changing the legal standard for liability for injuries; motor vehicle registration fees for horse trailers; quarantine rules for infectious diseases; licensing and regulating vets, farriers, massage therapists and acupuncturists; stable licensing, etc. The list goes on and on. The Horse Council, through its dedicated volunteer staff, works diligently to stay on top of the dizzyingly fast-paced world of State lawmaking during the legislative session, and to get the word out to horse people about what is being considered. Even more importantly, the Horse Council weighs in with legislators to make sure they understand the full ramifications of proposals they are considering, and to lend support to initiatives

that make sense. Especially in the legislative context, there is strength in numbers. And the more voters we can represent, the more legislators are going to sit up and take notice.

So—the Horse Council needs your support! We need every Maryland horse person to join as an individual, farm, business or youth member. We need every Maryland horse club or association to join as an association member. Dues are minimal, but our impact can be huge if we can honestly represent to our legislators that our membership is 30,000 strong (the approximate number of horse people in Maryland). Visit mdhorsecouncil.org for more information about joining, or ask any one of our members, all of which can be found under "members" on our website.

Still not sure if you care? Here are some things we anticipate will be under consideration by the legislature this year:

- All kinds of new and creative revenue-raising ideas. The state desperately needs money, and will be looking under the sofa cushions for all the nickels and dimes it can discover.
- Potential changes to the agricultural land preservation rules and opportunities
- Changes to the stable licensing requirements
- More action on the future of racing in Maryland
- Things we haven't anticipated

### Maryland Horse Council Joint Meeting with the Maryland Horse Industry Board

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

#### Miller Senate Building

11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Reception at 6 p.m. • Meeting at 7 p.m.

All are welcomed!

For more information, or to join MHC, please  
visit [www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)

But wait—there's more! Our need to be vigilant is not just a three-month-out-of-the-year thing. For one thing, the bills that will be introduced in the next session in Annapolis are being drafted NOW—right under our noses as we enjoy the moderating weather. For another, Maryland horse people are also very much affected by the State's regulatory bodies, such as the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Natural Resources, to name just a couple. These organizations operate year-round, of course, and can also have major impact on horse people. Just this spring and summer,

the Horse Council has weighed in on proposed striking new and additional requirements for nutrient/pasture management, which are still in the works, and on substantial restrictions on trail riders' use of the land surrounding the WSSC's Triadelphia Reservoir, also still an active issue.

We're sure you are ready to add your voice to the cohort of interested, involved and engaged Maryland horse people. Members get regular emailed updates about issues of interest, with information about how you can get more involved in any issue of your choice. We've already used the "strength in numbers" cliché, so here's another: "money talks." The Maryland Horse Council has formed a Political Action Committee. Funds contributed to the MHC PAC will be used to support candidates who stand up for the issues important to Maryland horse people and agriculture.

Don't be a bump on a log! Stand up, speak up and join up now!



# Maryland Horse Council Business Network

ATTENTION ALL MARYLAND STABLE OWNERS & MANAGERS, EQUINE  
INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS & OWNERS OF EQUINE-RELATED BUSINESSES

The Maryland Horse Council serves as YOUR Chamber of Commerce!

840174-11011

As a business or farm member of the Maryland Horse Council,  
you get to enjoy these great benefits:

- a FREE copy of the new book "Maryland Equine Law" for the first 100 farms or businesses that join or rejoin for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011
- automatic enrollment in the MHC Business Network\*
- FREE link to your business on [www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)
- e-mail updates on regulatory or legislative issues that could affect your business
- a FREE subscription to *The Equiery* print edition
- plus all MHC members receive special discounts, exclusive offers, and reduced rates for social functions.

For questions, please call 301.502.8929



FREE book for the first 100 farms or businesses to join or rejoin MHC!

### \*What is the MHC Business Network?

The MHC Business Network meets several times a year to provide, well, business networking opportunities, mini-business seminars, exclusive tours of Maryland-based equine businesses and a FREE lunch!

### MHC Fall 2011 Business Networking Lunches

**FARMER'S COOPERATIVE FEED MILL**  
(one of the few remaining mills in Maryland)  
**Tuesday November 29, 2011**

(All MHC Business Networking tours and lunches are limited to business and farm MHC members; for more information, see [www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)).

Farm Membership \$75     Business Membership: \$100

Business or Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Owner    Manager

Physical Location (street): \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address (street): \_\_\_\_\_  
(city/state/zip): \_\_\_\_\_ (city/state/zip): \_\_\_\_\_

Website (to be published): \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone (to be published): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues may be paid with a check, MasterCard, Visa, Discover or American Express

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Cardholder (as it appears on card): \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address of Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Application with a credit card may be scanned and e-mailed to [admin@mdhorsecouncil.org](mailto:admin@mdhorsecouncil.org); or faxed to 301.502.8929  
Application with a check must be mailed to: **Maryland Horse Council, P.O. Box 233 • Lisbon, MD 21765**  
Membership benefits are not in effect until dues are received. To join online, please visit [www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)