



PO Box 297, 36 Main St. N.,
Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0
Tel: 905-854-2672
Fax: 905-854-2644
Website:
www.cosaonline.com

For Immediate Release . . .

O'Donnell On Ontario Racing & OHRIA

CAMPBELLVILLE, Ontario . . . As one of the best harness racing drivers of all time, Bill O'Donnell has competed in a myriad of races around the world. His talent and skill elevated him to the very elite of his field leading to his induction into the horse racing hall of fame in both Canada and the US.

However, the race the Maritime native currently finds himself in is not on the racetrack. It's a race to save the horse racing industry in Ontario due to the Ontario Liberal party's plan to remove the slot parlours at a number of Ontario racetracks.

O'Donnell now does the majority of his steering not in a sulky, but from his position as president of the Central Ontario Standardbred Association known as COSA. This horsemen's group represents the men and women who compete at the Woodbine Entertainment Group's two racetracks, Woodbine and Mohawk where the best Standardbred racing in Canada is conducted.

For the past few weeks Bill has been extremely busy meeting with government officials as well as the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association (OHRIA) board where he represents the Standardbred horse associations which are OHRIA members, along with the OHRIA board consisting of:

Sue Leslie, Chair of OHRIA and President of The Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of Ontario (HBPA)

Nick Eaves, Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG)

Anna Meyers, Standardbred Breeders of Ontario Association (SBOA)

Robert Broadstock, President, Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario Inc. (QROOI)

Dr. Ted Clarke, Not-For-Profit Tracks

Bruce Barbour, Great Canadian Gaming Corporation, (GCGC) For Profit Tracks

Glenn Sikura, Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society (CTHS) Ontario Division.

"I have members every day asking me what they can do and I tell them to allow OHRIA to speak for them and the entire industry," Bill notes. "At the beginning OHRIA asked everyone involved in horse racing, and that includes Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing as well as harness, to write to government officials explaining how a reduction in slot revenue would affect them.

"It's been gratifying to see how many people have complied and then taken it one step further and sent their letters to their local newspapers. I would encourage more people to do the same. Get the message out there to your community and let people know that their neighbours will be the ones affected by any cuts to our percentage.

“OHRIA has developed an excellent website (value4money.com) which contains all the latest information, news articles and statistics on how many people are affected, etc., and I encourage everyone to become familiar with this material and use it in your letters.”

O'Donnell also stresses that the industry must speak with one voice and that voice is OHRIA.

“OHRIA were responsible in a large part for obtaining the slot deal in the first place and they are the best bet to help us keep it,” he reasoned. “They are the only organization which represents every person directly affected by this and it is crucial that we all allow them to speak for us in a professional manner the government will understand and respect.

“I urge everyone involved to follow OHRIA’s instructions and lead in this extremely important matter.

“OHRIA has engaged a public relations firm and as well as a lobbyist to work on our behalf to meet with the government and present them with a plan that will benefit both the industry and the government.

“I am speaking daily with politicians and their staff who have been contacting me regarding this matter and I welcome their input.”

Anyone with any questions or concerns should feel free to contact Bill or any of the COSA directors: John Bax, Joanne Colville, Dave Drew, Paul MacDonell, Jeff Ruch, Ben Wallace, Jim Wellwood or Bob Young. For contact information use the COSA website: www.cosaonline.com. or call the office at 905-854-2672.