**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE THE AIKEN STEEPLECHASE ASSOCIATION, THE ASSOCIATION’S BOARD MEMBERS, AND BOARD PRESIDENT PAUL SAUERBORN UPON THE DEDICATION OF THEIR NEW FACILITY.

Whereas, the House of Representatives is pleased to learn that a new venue in the City of Aiken will celebrate a tradition dating back almost a century ago, with plans to expand that honored tradition and benefit the community for generations yet to come; and

Whereas, some of Aiken’s early Winter Colony denizens held a 1930 event in Hitchcock Woods that gathered more than a thousand enthusiasts to watch jockeys guide their mounts over the fences; and

Whereas, leaders, including Ford Conger, and prominent members of the Aiken horse community, laid plans in 1960 to renew the steeplechase event at property adjacent to the Aiken Training Track over six decades ago; and

Whereas, the Spring Steeplechase drew crowds in excess of twenty thousand people, with numbers continuing to grow, and is the area’s largest one‑day gathering for a sports event. Adding a Fall Steeplechase coincided with the National Steeplechase Association’s calendar, and the two events have raised thousands of dollars each year to benefit worthy causes in the community; and

Whereas, the Aiken Steeplechase Association vision was to move from its historic venue to a home of its own, their vision became a reality in 2020; and

Whereas, in 2020, the City of Aiken unanimously voted to provide one million dollars to help fund the venture, and the association purchased the land for a little more than two million dollars; and

Whereas, located in Aiken’s Eastside about two miles from downtown, the one‑hundred‑forty‑acre venue is bounded by Rudy Mason Parkway, Richland Avenue, and Old Wagener Road; and

Whereas, the first phase of the construction for the mile‑long, tri‑oval racecourse involved excavation, grading, drainage, putting in irrigation and fencing, planting grass, and adding electrical and public‑address systems and wells, bringing the first‑phase estimate to 3.8 million dollars; and

Whereas, the COVID‑19 Pandemic not only cancelled the new venues first three events for the spring and fall of 2020 and for the spring of 2021, but also tightened the community’s economic status, and added to that, the new racecourse was not quite finished for the next steeplechase in the fall of 2021; and

Whereas, the Eastside venue is set for March 26, 2022, as the date for the christening of the new racetrack with the Spring Steeplechase and for showcasing the Aiken Steeplechase Association venue; and

Whereas, the association plans to use the new venue for more than just equestrian events, such as concerts, festivals, and charity fundraisers which might attract participants who might not otherwise be exposed to the steeplechase site; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives values the tradition, culture, competition, and revenue that the Aiken Steeplechase Association brings to Aiken and to the Palmetto State and wishes their members continued success in the days and years to come. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate the Aiken Steeplechase Association, the Association’s board members, and Board President Paul Sauerborn upon the dedication of their new facility.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Aiken Steeplechase Association Board President Paul Sauerborn.

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