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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Horse Country, Inc. Hires Executive Director, Begins Operations

Anne Sabatino Hardy has been selected as the first Executive Director of Horse Country, Inc., a new not-for-profit organization comprising farms, equine medical clinics and equine attractions that will offer tourism experiences to the public.

The organization will provide a central booking outlet that will also share the overarching story of Kentucky's Horse Country and participating locations to connect visitors with the story of the horses, the land and the people, and to develop fans of farms and clinics.

“As owners, breeders, farm managers, and veterinary practitioners we hope this can be our piece of the fan development puzzle; to share the story of the horse – from birth, to racing, and back to breeding,” said Price H. Bell, Jr. of Mill Ridge Farm and Nicoma Bloodstock. “By offering authentic, unique, coordinated experiences we will share with the public the history and stories of these amazing athletes who inspire us every day.”

“Kentucky has a wealth of tradition and history in the equine industry, and visitors flock to our racing and sport facilities, but it's sometimes challenging to access the farms and clinics,” said Hardy. “There is tremendous demand for experiences at those locations, and for encounters with the horse. We believe that opening the gates and providing memorable experiences will make true fans of our farms and clinics. It's exciting to see those who steward this beautiful land and care for these incredible athletes coming together to support that effort.”

“Stakeholder farms and members of the board have been working for nearly two years on making this idea a reality, and have grown in supporters every step of the way. Early on we worked with the Disney Institute to understand important principles of storytelling and customer experience,” said Bell. “And together we have developed a sustainable model. Now, with staff, we're beginning the next phase. There is a lot of work yet to be done, but we appreciate the support already demonstrated by the industry and community.”

In the coming months, the organization will undertake a branding initiative and begin evaluating technology solutions for the booking and ticketing system. More information will be released as the initiative develops.

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Anne Sabatino Hardy is a longtime Lexington resident and graduate of Asbury University. She also has lived abroad and traveled through the Middle East with husband, Jacob Hardy, a business owner and Lexington native. Hardy most recently worked with Associations International, a full service association management company in Lexington, Kentucky. She began her career at Preston-Osborne, where she served clients in a variety of sectors and on two Silver Anvil Award-winning campaigns. She also worked as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Cherry Chaser* and *Southsider* Magazines and has contributed to *Business Lexington*, *The Lane Report*, *Market Review* publications and *BG Magazine*. She is a member of the Governor's Mansion Centennial Celebration Committee and the 2014-2015 class of Leadership Lexington. She is a lifelong fan of her hometown Indianapolis Colts and frequent visitor to the races.

Horse Country, Inc. Board of Directors: Clifford Barry – **Pin Oak Stud**, P. Headley Bell – **Mill Ridge Farm**, Price H. Bell, Jr. – **Mill Ridge Farm**, Brutus J. Clay – **Runnymede Farm**, Luke H. Fallon, DVM – **Hagyard Equine Medical Institute**, Allison Hancock – **Claiborne Farm**, John Phillips – **Darby Dan Farm**, Mary Quinn Ramer – **VisitLEX**, Rusty Thompson – **Darley America**, Shannon Arvin – **Stoll Keenon Ogden**, Secretary.

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