

## **Website Letter**

In my first months at the Virginia Horse Center as its new CEO, it has been exciting to see the resurgence of equine activity after COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed. Most shows have been back to their pre-COVID size, and many have been much larger. It has also been a wonderful experience to get to know our Foundation Board, VHC staff, and community leaders with whom we interact. It is my sense that the Virginia Horse Center has become a part of the Lexington, Rockbridge County, and greater Virginia community, and my desire is to further strive to grow this community relationship. My wife and I have purchased a home in Lexington, and I plan to get involved within the community.

I cannot thank the staff enough, especially my predecessor John Nicholson, for helping make my transition to the Virginia Horse Center a seamless one. But the Virginia Horse Center was not new to me. First, I was a great friend of the first CEO Bob Reel and worked with the initial committee when the Horse Center was being designed. At the time, I was building the Governor Hunt Horse Complex in Raleigh and the Western NC Agricultural Center in Asheville, and through the years I have officiated, been a show promoter, and have had horses showing here.

Now that we are allowed to have spectators again, I encourage you to come for a visit. Almost all of our events are open to the public and are free of charge. One of the nice things about the Horse Center is our great variety of equine events. It is possible to visit every week and see a totally different breed or discipline event such as Arabian, Quarter Horse, Saddlebreds, Hunter Jumpers, Dressage, Reiners, Horse Trials, Barrel Racing, Cowboy Mounted Shooting and more. When visiting, feel free to drive up on Otis Mead Hill and look over the acres of blue rooftops which blend into the Blue Ridge Mountains. While up there I like to look at trailer tags to get a feel for the great distances exhibitors travel to compete at the Virginia Horse Center. It really confirms the tourist benefit the Horse Center contributes to our Rockbridge community.

It is exciting to listen to our exhibitors talk about all the noticeable improvements that have been completed in the past few years. For horsemen and horsewomen, the most important thing is good footing. Most of our 13 show and schooling rings have recently had footing renovations. Two of our eight barns have been renovated. This has included new stall fronts, painting, LED lights, new insulation, etc. Anderson Coliseum has new LED lighting and Big Ass Fans. This has all been made possible by generous supporters of the Virginia Horse Center. Projects like these are only undertaken when funds are committed, and recent improvements have surpassed the \$2 million mark. Many more projects are being planned as funds become available, and your gifts to this 501(c)3 charity are greatly appreciated.

The link to our calendar is <http://vahorsecenter.org/upcoming-events/>. Whether exhibitor or spectator, you are invited to come visit us at the Virginia Horse Center.

**Glenn T. Petty**

CEO

Virginia Horse Center

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