



**BIG BARN**  
OF KENTUCKY, INC.

2023/2024  
**KENTUCKY HORSE PARK  
ANNUAL REPORT**



KENTUCKY HORSE  
NOVEMBER 1978

THE HONORABLE JULIAN M. CARROLL  
GOVERNOR, COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

BRUCE MONTGOMERY  
COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF PARKS





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## Message From Lee Carter

Throughout its history the Kentucky Horse Park has celebrated the horse, its impact on humanity, and the Commonwealth. Our belief that there is a special connection between the head, the heart, and the horse is on display every day.

The Park is uniquely positioned at the crossroads for two of the Commonwealth's signature industries – equine and tourism. The total value of Kentucky's equine and equine related assets is estimated at \$27.7 billion in 2022, while in 2023 tourism contributed \$13.8 billion to the state's economy.

Competition continues to grow from neighboring states and facilities seeking to supplant the Park's position, both for equine competitions and tourism guests. Yet not only have we upheld our prominence in the sporting world, but we are also experiencing an exciting period of growth in both events and visitor numbers.

The previous year has also seen significant improvements across the Park's facilities and grounds. The current renovations and construction projects have created a palpable energy throughout the 1,220 acres. The investment made via the biennium budget provided resources to begin addressing aging infrastructure and improving daily operations.

We are proud to be the caretakers of this treasured space and walk in the hoofprints of those before us while preparing the path for those who follow. Our success is not ours alone but belongs to the entire Commonwealth. And it is our love of the horse that keeps us on the trail.



Lee Carter  
Kentucky Horse Park President







# EQUINE



**70** Average Number of **Resident Horses**

**40+** Breeds Represented

**9** Breeds listed on the **Livestock Conservancy List** as critically endangered or threatened endangered

**Average monthly cost of care per resident horse:**  
FY23 = \$281 • FY24 = \$300



**7** Retired champions in the Hall of Champions

**2** Breeders' Cup Champions

**\$23.1 Million**  
Total winnings of all retired champions

Visitors may tour the KHP grounds by trolley, being pulled by two beautiful draft horses throughout the main season. This tour provides visitors a chance to learn more about the features, history, and current events of the Park. They can also visit the Hall of Champions where the excitement of the racetrack is brought to life by the elite group of champion horses.

Humankind's 6,000-year bond with the horse is brought to life with music, narration, and personal interaction at the Parade of Breeds Show. From the rare Marsh Tacky to the iconic American Quarter Horse, breed representatives perform in colorful attire that evokes the culture, time period, and customs of their native land.

**4** Weeks of **Mustang Troop**

**4** Weeks of **Youth Riding Camp**

The Mustang Troop, founded nearly 30 years ago, invites underserved youth from the Central Kentucky community to a two-week summer horse camp experience held at the KHP. Offered free of charge, the horse camp includes riding lessons, personal development activities, daily transportation, meals, riding apparel, and mementos.



**MUSTANG TROOP**







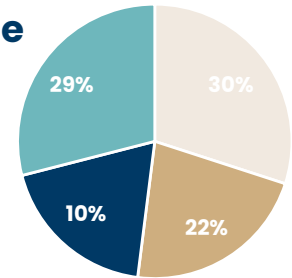
# VISITORS

The KHP welcomed guests from all 50 states, as well as several international destinations. Based on survey data collected, 52% of visitors indicated the KHP was an important factor in their decision to visit the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The overwhelming majority of KHP guests stay securing lodging in hotels, home rentals, or campgrounds and average 2-3 nights.



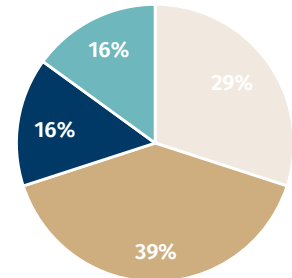
## Household Income

- \$125,000 +
- \$75,000 - \$125,000
- \$50,000 - \$75,000
- Up to \$50,000

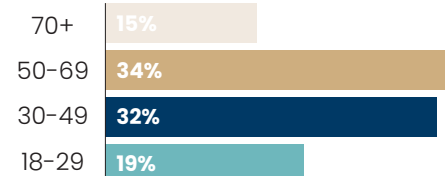


## Education

- Master's Degree
- Bachelors/Associates
- Some College
- High School Graduate



## Ages





"Uma no Kokoro, Heart of the Horse" Exhibit



Trying on jockey silks in the "Black Horsemen of the Kentucky Turf" Exhibit



A lesson in horse anatomy during the "Facts & Fun at the Museum" presentation



# INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE HORSE

The largest and most comprehensive museum in the world dedicated to exploring the important history of all horses and their impact on human civilization. Through its ever-growing library and archives, it also serves as a resource for scholars and researchers throughout the world. With over 64,000 square feet, IMH is dedicated to the history of the horse and its unique relationship with humans through time. Permanent museum exhibitions highlight the history of the horse from ancient times to the many popular sporting events of modern times.

Opened in September 2024, the Uma no Kokoro, Heart of the Horse, exhibit is an immersive, educational overview of the horse world in Japan. This exhibit explores horses' spiritual and cultural role in Japan, their use on the battlefield, and the robust world of Japanese racing and horsemanship.



**The International Museum of the Horse has catalogued 29,900 items in Pass Perfect, including:**









# CAMPGROUND & RETAIL

The KHP boasts a 260-site campground attracting over 40,000 campers annually. The campground’s pool, tennis courts, playgrounds, and easy bike access to Legacy Trail make it one of Kentucky’s finest resort campgrounds.

## KHP Campground: 6.15% increase in total revenue

2024	# of Available Nights	Occupied Nights	Percent
Standard Electric	67,840	44,724	65.93%
Primitive Electric/Non-Electric	43,920	5,524	12.58%
<b>2023</b>			
Standard Electric	66,003	43,513	65.93%
Primitive Electric/Non-Electric	43,800	5,648	12.89%



## The KHP Campground, Gift Shop & Visitor Center implemented a new point of sale system.

The KHP Gift Shop features a wide array of Kentucky Horse Park apparel and merchandise, Kentucky Proud and Kentucky-made products, horse-themed home decor, jewelry, books, artwork, toys, and more. As a Breyer Flagship Retailer, the shop carries one of the largest selections of Breyer model horses, accessories, and other Breyer novelty items.

## 11% Increase in Gift Shop Revenue

\$1,454,833 FY24 • \$1,306,506 FY23

## Best Monthly Retail Sales







Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event



SHOWdownLEX Concert featuring Darius Rucker



# EVENTS

The KHP hosts a diverse selection of events. On any given weekend, visitors will find some of the most fun things to do in Lexington, including horse shows, rodeos, festivals, concerts, shopping and more. Some events hosted at the KHP include Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event, National Horse Show, Pony Finals, Split Rock Jumping Tour, Bluegrass Classic Dog Show, Spirit of the Bluegrass Music Festival, BreyerFest, and many more.

New events held in FY24 include KHSAA Wrestling Championship, KHSAA Cross-Country Championship, ShowDown Lex Concert, Gay Polo League International Tournament, and Taste of the Bluegrass.

	FY24	FY23	FY22
<b>Number of Equine Events</b>	60	56	52
<b>% Increase Previous Year</b>	7.14%	7.69%	
<b>Number of Non-Equine Events</b>	93	46	28
<b>% Increase Previous Year</b>	102.17%	64.29%	



**KHSAA STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT**



**KENTUCKY CRAFTED MARKET**



**BULLS, BANDS, & BARRELS**



**BLUEGRASS CLASSIC DOG SHOW**



**SOUTHERN LIGHTS HOLIDAY FESTIVAL**



**BREYERFEST**



**JUNIOR LEAGUE CHARITY HORSE SHOW**



**BOURBON COUNTRY BURN**





Georgetown/Scott County Festival of the Horse Parade



BreyerFest Special Performance



Field Trip Meet & Greet



National Mounted Police Colloquium



# MOUNTED POLICE

The Kentucky Horse Park Mounted Police barn houses our equine police force and their horses. Officers provide daily barn tours, as well as perform their patrol duties by horseback, motor vehicle, golf cart, or on foot. The officers play an important role in the park, providing effective crowd control and being the first to respond during emergencies. The KHP Mounted Police, the largest Mounted Police force in the Commonwealth, can be seen patrolling the park's 1,200+ acres 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Colloquium attendance increased 55%  
FY24 = 149 • FY23 = 96



Demonstrations performed at  
BreyerFest and Hats Off Day



Provided special detail law enforcement support  
at the Kentucky Derby, Kentucky State Fair,  
and Governor's Inauguration



Parade representation at July 4th (Lexington),  
Festival of the Horse (Georgetown),  
Secretariat Parade (Paris)

The KHP Mounted Police and Lexington Mounted Police units host the annual National Mounted Police Colloquium and Civilian Sensory Clinic at the Park. These clinics bring people and horses from all over the country to learn new techniques, share ideas, and train their horses. Training is always conducted in a controlled environment geared toward improving the confidence of both the horse and rider.







Construction of new competition barn



Renovated lobby of the International Museum of the Horse



# FACILITIES & CAPITAL PROJECTS

In 2028, the Park will celebrate its 50th anniversary. As with other facilities or buildings that reach this milestone, you recognize certain areas require extra attention. The deferred maintenance and capital needs of the Park continue to expand.

The increased Maintenance Pool funds provided via the state budget have been utilized to address some aging infrastructure. In FY19, the Maintenance Pool allocated for the KHP was \$600,000. This was increased to \$900,000 in FY21 and FY22, then to \$1.5m in FY23 and FY24. These added resources have been vital to the Park operation and upkeep.

Additionally, the Capital Projects funded in the FY23/24 budgets provided significant improvements. Projects included roof replacement, partial renovation of the International Museum of the Horse, and construction of new competition barns. Each of these projects have made a positive impact on the KHP and our guests.

Lastly, key staff positions have been added, allowing preventative maintenance to happen on a regular schedule. This preventative maintenance enables us to better address issues when they arise.

## FACILITIES

**Improved energy management,  
FY24 usage has decreased  
26.2% from baseline  
established in FY18**

**Savings in excess of \$670,000  
when calculating FY18 usage  
on FY24 rates**

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

**Construction of two new barn  
pavilions, adding 200 new stalls**

**Renovation of International  
Museum of the Horse lobby**

**Roof replacement completed  
on several buildings**









# HUMAN RESOURCES

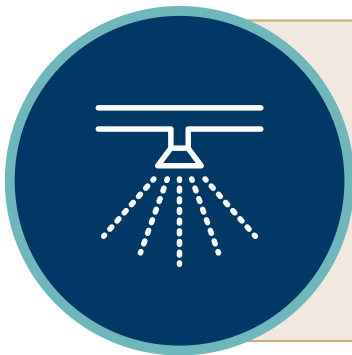
The passage of House Bill 39 during the 2023 legislative session altered the employment structure of the KHP workforce moving forward. Those newly hired after July 1, 2023, shall not be subject to KRS Chapter 18A. The KHP did not see any negative consequences of the new non-chapter structure. All merit/classified employees maintained their prior status. As these employees leave through normal attrition, promote or transfer, the new positions are established as non-chapter positions. Park staff can approve hires, conduct background checks, and negotiate final offers in-house. This has resulted in improved efficiency and made hiring quicker.

## 2023: 64 State Employees

**61 Merit • 3 Non-Chapter**

## 2024: 71 State Employees

**52 Merit • 19 Non-Chapter**



### Safety

**Modernized several sprinkler systems**

**Installed new fire alarm panels/devices  
in select areas**









# FINANCIAL

The KHP financial performance has improved because of increased revenues and better managed expenses. Since 2019, the Park has seen an increase in revenue from all major categories. Specifically, Campground revenue increased by 13.95%, Event revenue by 38.31%, and Visitor revenue by 51.79%.

The KHP had a positive cash position in FY23 and FY24. Due to spending authority restrictions, expenses carried forward from FY23 into FY24 totaled \$246,898, and from FY24 into FY25 totaled \$1,022,238. However, the Park had a positive cash balance in each year to be pay these expenses in the fiscal year they were incurred had the spending authority been sufficient.

The continued investment made by the state budget, which includes Capital Projects, Maintenance Funds, and General Fund allotment, has far reaching impacts that will last generations. Without this support, the Park would be at a disadvantage, resulting in diminished value for both the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the equestrian community.

REVENUE	FY23	FY24
Event	6,058,138.07	7,050,043.65
Campground	2,320,719.40	2,285,317.64
Visitors	3,080,219.03	3,141,239.45
Other	1,095,139.50	778,352.94
Allotment	2,199,100.00	2,481,900.00
Federal	-	156,290.05
	<b>\$14,753,316.00</b>	<b>\$15,893,143.73</b>
EXPENSES	FY23	FY24
Personnel	7,813,164.19	8,943,660.82
Facility Management	3,408,579.57	2,629,524.93
Administrative	1,770,206.39	1,907,571.37
Advertising	91,995.53	88,338.25
Items for Resale	833,354.32	783,053.98
Federal	2,509.00	185,256.29
	<b>\$13,919,809.00</b>	<b>\$14,537,405.64</b>
NET INCOME	<b>\$833,507.00</b>	<b>\$1,355,738.09</b>









# SERVICE STANDARDS

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## We Are Better Together

Each staff position, and staff person, is unique. This uniqueness provides us with varying views, thoughts, strengths, and weaknesses. Like the countless breeds represented at the Park, we celebrate our individual diversity, while recognizing that there is strength in a herd. Our affinity for the horse binds us together, and we know that we are BETTER TOGETHER!

## We Will Provide Authentic Service

Since our inception, we have provided authentic experiences for guests to engage our equestrian community (trolley tours, carriage rides, demos, events, etc.). We will continue to honor that history. To provide authentic service, our guest interactions should embrace our distinctiveness and be welcoming, engaging, courteous, and present.

## We Are Responsive & Responsible

Our collective success is tied to our individual influence. Taking ownership of present opportunities (big or small) reduces assumptions and complacency. To be responsive and responsible means that we will not be passive, watching others from the outside. Rather, we will take the lead line, leave the barn, and hit the trails.

## We Show Gratitude

We recognize our guests have options before visiting the Park. Likewise, our co-workers make our work enjoyable. Gratitude is a healthy life-style choice and contagious to everyone around. Showing gratitude mends fences, and builds paddocks. Like treats for our horses, gratitude is always appreciated.





# KENTUCKY HORSE PARK COMMISSION MEMBERS

Alston Kerr, Chairwoman

Alex Boone, Vice-Chair

Mary Lowry

Stewart Perry

Jennifer Mossotti

P.G. Peeples

Bill Alverson

Jennifer Cave

Emily Ferguson

Catherine Prather

Buff Bradley

Secretary Lindy Casebier

Secretary Holly Johnson

Commissioner Jonathan Shell

Mary Quinn Ramer

Joe Pat Covington

Nancy Cox

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

Lee Carter

President

Karla DiNardo

Vice President, Sponsorship Sales

Misty Judy

Vice President, Legal and Human Resources

Nicole Rivera

Vice President, Business and Event Services

Jill Blevins

Administrative Branch Manager

Kerry Howe

Director of Marketing

Emily Lozon

Director, International Museum of the Horse

Lisa Rakes

Captain, Mounted Police

Rob Reynolds

Director, Maintenance and Grounds

Brianna Flannery

Group Sales Coordinator

Andy Freitag

Equine Operations Manager

Louise Gillam

Events Manager

Mark van Ruiten

Event Coordinator II

Tony Vaughn

Visitor Center/Gift Shop Manager

Dawn Walker

Campground Manager









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[www.KyHorsePark.com](http://www.KyHorsePark.com)

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