

# MIDWEST/CANADA



Woodbine is working on having more fans come to the races

MICHAEL BURNS

## Future Games

*Innovation leads Woodbine and Ontario back after government slots fiasco*

BY LENNY SHULMAN

**WITH MORE THAN A DOZEN YEARS** of stability under its belt thanks to the slots-at-racetracks program that provided about \$345 million annually to the horse racing industry, Ontario and its racing jewel, Woodbine, were flourishing as models of success for the partnership of expanded gaming and horse racing in the first years of this century. Kentucky-based farms such as Spendthrift were sending sires such as TVG Breeders' Cup Mile (G1T) winner Court Vision north of the border to stand at stud and locals' appetite for Ontario-breds equaled if not exceeded their desire for Kentucky products.

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## 2017 LEADING SIRES IN INDIANA



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2017 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2017 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>NOTIONAL</b> (04, In Excess), Swifty Farms	\$2,000	41/12	0/0	0/0	(Bagma, \$26,730)	<b>\$189,711</b>	284	6	0.84	1.13
2	<b>FORT PRADO</b> (01, El Prado), Swifty Farms	\$2,000	33/5	0/0	0/0	(Prado's Sweet Ride, \$15,000)	<b>\$103,494</b>	168	2	0.85	1.44
3	<b>DEPUTY STORM</b> (01, Forestry), R Star Stallions	\$1,500	10/3	0/0	0/0	(Wyfold, \$13,890)	<b>\$36,360</b>	91	2	0.99	1.22
4	<b>BENNY THE BULL</b> (03, Lucky Lionel), Swifty Farms	\$3,000	20/2	0/0	0/0	(Betty the Babe, \$8,930)	<b>\$36,242</b>	*208	2	0.86	1.00
5	<b>ELITE SQUADRON</b> (04, Officer), Midwest Equine & Veterinary Hospital	\$2,000	6/3	0/0	0/0	(Shirota, \$13,320)	<b>\$35,966</b>	65	0	0.61	1.06
6	<b>MONBA</b> (05, Maria's Mon), Nicks Farm	\$2,000	12/2	0/0	0/0	(Z Z Rider, \$12,000)	<b>\$35,626</b>	68	0	0.71	1.31
7	<b>GOLD CASE</b> (94, Forty Niner) Died, 2014		6/1	0/0	0/0	(Dive Bar, \$12,614)	<b>\$19,608</b>	*604	19	0.99	1.09
8	<b>SILVER MOUNTAIN</b> (05, Victory Gallop), Nicks Farm	\$2,000	5/2	0/0	0/0	(Big Silver Hoss, \$6,887)	<b>\$19,122</b>	23	0	0.51	0.96
9	<b>LANTANA MOB</b> (05, Posse), Southern Indiana Equine	\$2,500	10/3	0/0	0/0	(Supreme Justice, \$7,600)	<b>\$18,698</b>	49	3	1.03	1.09
10	<b>CASHEL CASTLE</b> (99, Silver Ghost), Swifty Farms	\$1,000	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Dorothe Marie, \$14,346)	<b>\$16,176</b>	113	4	0.88	1.02
11	<b>ELUSIVE BLUFF</b> (06, Elusive Quality), Southern Indiana Equine	\$1,500	4/2	0/0	0/0	(Cute Little Mess, \$7,500)	<b>\$12,433</b>	37	2	1.19	0.87
12	<b>DOMESTIC DISPUTE</b> (00, Unbridled's Song), Indiana Stallion Station	\$2,000	3/2	0/0	0/0	(Short Hill Kit Kat, \$6,300)	<b>\$11,689</b>	*333	2	0.84	1.16
13	<b>STRONG HOPE</b> (00, Grand Slam), Midwest Equine & Veterinary Hospital	\$2,000	3/0	0/0	0/0	(Kitai, \$7,094)	<b>\$11,294</b>	338	5	0.93	1.67
14	<b>SWEET RETURN</b> (GB) (00, Elmaamul), Nicks Farm	\$2,000	10/0	0/0	0/0	(Pasta Giovanni, \$5,100)	<b>\$11,152</b>	104	0	0.66	0.85



MICHAEL BURNS, (INSET) COURTESY JAMES GAGLIANO

Woodbine Entertainment Group chairman Jim Lawson; inset, during his hockey days at Brown University

Then came the hammer. In 2012 the Ontario provincial government, without consultation with the horse industry and lacking any plan for its future, announced the cancellation of the slots-at-racetracks program. The effects were immediate, particularly for the province's breeding industry.

"It has taken a long time for the Ontario breeding community to get to the point where there was a real feeling of an upward swing," said Bernard McCormack, owner of Ontario-based Cara Bloodstock, at the time. "Hopeful expectation became fearful expectation overnight."

Jim Lawson, who had sat on the Woodbine Entertainment Group board, became the chairman of WEG just months

## Indiana Stakes Producing Sires

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### IRISH ROAD - Private

Unbridled's Song - Twin Propeller by Known Fact

Sire of outstanding 2YO **Irish Nuggets** (\$120,591), 4 wins by 18 lengths, on-the-board in 7 of 9 starts incl. Churchill's \$100,000 Debutante S.; SPW **Mani Income**; allowance winners **MAJOR HIGHWAY** (\$435,541, 9 wins by nearly 25 lengths), **IT'S TIME TO LAUGH** (\$203,164, 9 wins), **MISO BAD** (\$129,457, 3 wins), etc.

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Storm Cat - Ashado, by Saint Ballado

Sire of 2016 SWI CAME TO PRAISE, a California MSW

2nd time out and winner of the \$100,000 Indiana Stallion Stakes in Oct. Sire of 83% Rnrs, 68% Wnrs incl. back-to-back Belmont Park winner **ANGEL CHOIR** (\$115,829); 4 1/2-length 2014 ALW winner **PURRPURPURR** (\$98,403), a 3 3/4-length MSW winner 2nd time out and returned on-the-board in the \$85,000 Indiana Stallion S.; **EL COCO LOCO** (\$98,207), 2016 allowance winner who was on-the-board in the \$100,000 Sagamore Sired S.; etc.

### Top Five Indiana Juvenile Sire in 2016



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# 2017 LEADING SIRES IN CANADA



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2017 Stud Fee Can\$	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2017 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	IMPERIALISM (01, Langfuhr), Esquirol Farms	\$2,500	24/5	1/2	0/1	(Imperial Hint, \$195,000)	\$252,197	225	5	0.79	0.99
2	OLD FORESTER (01, Forestry), T. C. Westmeath Stud Farm	\$4,000	24/4	0/0	0/0	(Ritz Lass, \$25,014)	\$96,157	365	13	1.44	1.55
3	WHERE'S THE RING (99, Seeking the Gold), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$3,000	15/4	0/0	0/0	(Sick Love, \$14,640)	\$63,617	332	9	1.34	1.39
4	VALUE PLUS (01, Unbridled's Song), Strideaway Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	13/1	0/0	0/0	(Falina's Song, \$17,360)	\$44,293	*356	3	0.94	1.12
5	NOT BOURBON (05, Not Impossible), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$3,500	8/3	0/0	0/0	(Not Beaucette, \$16,200)	\$42,688	73	2	1.11	1.35
6	MILWAUKEE BREW (97, Wild Again), Adena Springs North	\$5,000	13/2	0/0	0/0	(Mythos, \$11,400)	\$42,201	*546	24	1.20	1.47
7	IT'S NO JOKE (02, Distorted Humor), Esquirol Farms	\$2,000	15/2	0/0	0/0	(Ned Devine, \$14,964)	\$40,436	90	3	1.13	1.01
8	GOTCHA GOLD (03, Coronado's Quest), Peaceful Valley Farms	\$2,500	19/1	0/0	0/0	(Making Havoc, \$11,750)	\$35,782	*128	1	0.84	1.35
9	SLIGO BAY (IRE) (98, Sadler's Wells), Adena Springs North	\$5,000	11/1	0/0	0/0	(Ol Winedrinker Who, \$14,300)	\$27,802	*390	12	1.21	1.40
10	QUEST (99, Seeking the Gold)	N/A	1/0	0/0	0/0	(Greengrassofyoming, \$27,500)	\$27,500	142	2	0.77	1.29
11	SILENT NAME (JPN) (02, Sunday Silence), Adena Springs North	\$10,000	10/1	0/0	0/0	(Persky's Spirit, \$18,600)	\$26,717	*336	15	1.43	1.24
12	GIANT GIZMO (04, Giant's Causeway), Adena Springs North	\$7,500	8/2	0/0	0/0	(Ruth Less Blue, \$12,600)	\$21,738	132	7	1.98	1.55
13	KENTUCKY BEAR (05, Mr. Greeley), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	Private	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Seniorita Pride, \$18,240)	\$19,430	64	2	1.32	1.29
14	BOLD N' FLASHY (89, Bold Ruckus)	N/A	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Azimut, \$13,190)	\$16,702	354	16	1.29	1.21
15	SAFFIR (02, Unbridled)	Died, 2014	4/1	0/0	0/0	(Arnhem, \$13,600)	\$15,866	94	2	1.35	1.22
16	SOCIETY'S CHAIRMAN (03, Not Impossible), Shannondoe Farm	\$5,000	1/0	0/0	0/0	(Code Warrior, \$13,200)	\$13,200	21	3	3.86	1.08
17	ONE WAY LOVE (95, Regal Classic)	N/A	3/1	0/0	0/0	(He's Etain, \$10,420)	\$12,462	331	3	0.92	1.27
18	LEONNATUS ANTEAS (04, Stormy Atlantic), Colebrook Farms Stallion Station	\$3,500	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Im On It, \$11,385)	\$12,402	85	2	1.03	1.16
19	WILKO (02, Awesome Again), Paulee Thoroughbreds	Private	11/0	0/0	0/0	(Wilko Freeway, \$3,780)	\$11,127	*229	5	1.09	1.19
20	RUN TO VICTORY (99, Gilded Time), Bar None Ranches Ltd.	\$2,000	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Runasaurus Rex, \$9,600)	\$9,600	38	0	0.37	0.96

after the government abandoned the slots-at-racetrack program. A former hockey player at Brown University who was good enough to play in the Montreal Canadiens' minor-league system for several years, Lawson inherited a pile of problems that have forced Woodbine to look at innovative ways to push its product forward in a marketplace that gets ever more competitive.

The Rexdale facility, which sits on 700 acres just a few furlongs from Toronto's airport, west of downtown, is positioning itself for the future as a racing and entertainment center. But it also is engaged in a daily battle to bring racing along as a sustainable business despite the continued lagging of the Canadian breeding industry.

A year after the darkest days of 2012, and after hearing from the racing industry about its economic impact on the area, the Ontario government announced a five-year plan that provided \$400 million to the province's horse racing industry, still a far cry from the \$345 annual stipend. The 156 Thoroughbred dates run at Woodbine in 2012 were reduced to 133, the figure at which it still sits for the season that runs from April–December. The reduced cash flow also curtailed infrastructure upgrades, consumer amenities, and improvements to technology and stabling areas.

"It was an extremely difficult environment," said Lawson of the beginning of his chairmanship in 2012. "There was plenty of doom and gloom, and there was no transition plan. In retro-

spect I think the government understood the mistake in their ways. There wasn't appropriate notice or consultation or thinking through of the ramifications of its actions.

"This is a very labor-intensive industry. On the Thoroughbred side, live racing provides 2.1 jobs per horse. Those employment numbers are significant in the province, especially in an econo-



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## 2017 CANADA SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs.	Wnrs
Imperialism	24	5
Old Forester	24	4
Where's the Ring	15	4
Not Bourbon	8	3
It's No Joke	15	2
Milwaukee Brew	13	2
Giant Gizmo	8	2

my that had lost a lot of its manufacturing. Conservatively you're talking about 20,000-25,000 jobs. For the government to unilaterally cut off what had been a primary source of funding and a backbone for the industry was dramatic and certainly had ramifications in terms of breeding and racing and an overall lack of investment."

Lawson didn't excuse the horse indus-

try from blame, however, saying it had become complacent because of its revenue-sharing agreements in Ontario as well as other jurisdictions. Plants such as Woodbine were logical sites for slot machines in the 1990s because the bricks and mortar existed, as did the culture of gambling, making it more socially acceptable. In the 14 years that followed, Ontario ostensibly became a model for the marriage of the

gaming and horse racing industries, but Lawson noted there were fissures below the surface.

"The industries hadn't really come together because in part there was a cannibalization of the racing industry," he said. "We changed the way we did business in certain respects—we catered our food and beverage toward the casino, stopped charging for admission and parking, and became complacent in certain aspects of marketing and operations. Then we woke up one day and found ourselves in a new environment with online poker and Internet gaming and instant lotteries, plus competition from simulcasting and other sports. That all happened against the background of us having to dramatically reduce costs and investments such as innovative products and different marketing avenues, so the industry was hurt in that way as well."

According to The Jockey Club Report of Mares Bred, in 2012 Ontario saw 1,288 mares bred. The withdrawal of government funding for the slots program had an immediate negative effect, as in 2013 that number sank to 726 mares bred and in 2014 dropped to 630, a more than 50% decline in two years. The past two years have seen a modest bump to 797 mares bred in Ontario in 2015 and 761 in 2016.

"It killed the breeding business," stated Mark Casse, the dominant Thoroughbred trainer in Ontario over the past decade. "When you breed a horse, it's a long-term

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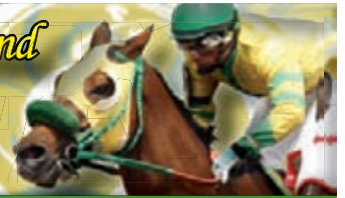
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## 2017 LEADING SIRES IN OHIO



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2017 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2017 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>COWTOWN CAT</b> (04, Distorted Humor), Mapleton Thoroughbred Farm	\$3,000	58/13	1/1	0/1	(Tiger Blood, \$65,500)	<b>\$337,700</b>	186	3	1.12	1.29
2	<b>INDY WIND</b> (02, A.P. Indy), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,000	19/8	0/0	0/0	(A. P. Cino, \$30,000)	<b>\$121,470</b>	74	1	1.11	1.08
3	<b>KISS THE KID</b> (03, Lemon Drop Kid), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$2,500	11/2	0/0	0/0	(Bow Tie Affair, \$24,400)	<b>\$57,388</b>	41	0	1.00	1.68
4	<b>MR. MABEE</b> (01, Storm Cat)	N/A	4/2	0/0	0/0	(She Mabee Wild, \$47,500)	<b>\$51,746</b>	71	0	0.71	0.83
5	<b>CITY WEEKEND</b> (02, Carson City), Meadow Springs	\$2,000	14/5	0/0	0/0	(Springtime City, \$12,790)	<b>\$45,359</b>	103	1	0.75	0.89
6	<b>E Z'S GENTLEMAN</b> (05, Yankee Gentleman), Duncan Farms	\$2,500	8/2	0/0	0/0	(E Z's Mistress, \$27,000)	<b>\$38,322</b>	35	0	0.24	1.27
7	<b>PARENTS' REWARD</b> (98, Mr. Prospector), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$1,000	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Somethin Somethin, \$14,962)	<b>\$28,016</b>	57	3	0.96	0.80
8	<b>KING OF THE ROXY</b> (04, Littleexpectations), Poplar Creek Horse Center	\$1,000	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Shes My Girl, \$27,380)	<b>\$27,634</b>	12	0	0.37	0.86
9	<b>BARYSHNIKOV</b> (06, Empire Maker)	N/A	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Queen Del Valle, \$11,800)	<b>\$18,000</b>	9	0	1.55	0.91
10	<b>ALCINDOR</b> (07, Unbridled's Song)	N/A	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Byers Beware, \$10,774)	<b>\$17,174</b>	15	0	1.26	1.32
11	<b>WESTERN PRIDE</b> (98, Way West), R.C. Cline Thoroughbred Farm	\$1,500	2/1	0/0	0/0	(Sweet Butterfly, \$15,380)	<b>\$16,620</b>	104	0	0.62	0.94
12	<b>LIGHTNIN N THUNDER</b> (01, Storm Cat), Ben Mears Farm	\$2,000	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Enchanted Boots, \$15,730)	<b>\$16,184</b>	203	6	0.87	1.06
13	<b>KILLENAULE</b> (02, Fusaichi Pegasus)	N/A	4/2	0/0	0/0	(Angelnaule, \$8,989)	<b>\$15,678</b>	94	0	0.49	0.84
14	<b>HOSTILE TAKEOVER</b> (04, Dixie Union), Raimonde Farms	\$1,500	4/1	0/0	0/0	(He's Taken, \$9,134)	<b>\$13,120</b>	13	0	0.70	1.08

deal, and when the government pulled the money, it takes a long time to recover. The breeding problem has to affect field size because they're breeding so few horses in Canada.

"I've always said it's all about the mare population. If you don't have the mare

population, it's difficult to bring any stallions here. They're trying a new program where they're helping to supplement owners who want to buy mares, and they're going to need to do more of that to develop horses here."

Glenn Sikura, president of the Ontario

division of the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society, said the mare program was developed around Christmas last year with funding from the CTHS and the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association. A buyer who purchased a mare outside Canada and brought her



WOODBINE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Woodbine is working on plans for an entertainment center featuring a 5,000-seat concert venue

## 2017 LEADING SIRE IN IOWA

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								2017 Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>STROLL</b> (00, Pulpit), Iowa State University Horse Farm	\$2,000	25/5	0/0	0/0	(Croninthebarbarian, \$24,600)	<b>\$114,999</b>	*269	11	1.06	1.31
2	<b>SING BABY SING</b> (03, Unbridled's Song), Madison County Thoroughbreds	\$2,000	27/4	0/0	0/0	(Raising Rumors, \$22,800)	<b>\$101,777</b>	79	2	0.73	0.88
3	<b>HEART OF THE STORM</b> (04, Storm Cat)	N/A	11/4	0/0	0/0	(Battered, \$16,216)	<b>\$64,290</b>	60	1	0.73	0.86
4	<b>WOKE UP DREAMIN</b> (00, Holy Bull), Madison County Thoroughbreds	\$2,000	2/0	0/0	0/0	(Dreamin, \$14,920)	<b>\$17,220</b>	155	4	0.79	0.91
5	<b>WILD GOLD</b> (90, Wild Again)	N/A	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Canela Caliente, \$7,726)	<b>\$11,476</b>	247	3	0.76	0.85

to Ontario to foal received 50% of the purchase price of the mare, up to \$15,000 Canadian funds. The mare has to be bred back in Ontario for one year, and the resultant foal must make its first start in Ontario or be run through the CTHS sale in Toronto.

"We got 26 mares through the program, which is actually solid because we weren't sure of the funding and got a late start, missing the November sale at Keeneland," said Sikura. "It was well-received, and we'll attempt to carry on. A lot of new sires are represented at our sales through this, and we'll have stud farms up here selling extra seasons because of these mares. Woodbine has expressed interest in perhaps contributing in future years, so at least there's a good conversation happening and it's important we address the problem of our horse population."

Despite the ongoing effects from 2012, Casse stressed that things have improved in Ontario over the past few years. "Woodbine is having great meets and handle has been up although a lot of that comes from simulcasting. For us, it's still a great place to race and a great place to develop horses, so it will continue to be a big part of our program."

All-sources handle has actually shown good growth for Woodbine Thoroughbred offerings over the last several years, considering it has basically been flat throughout North America. In 2013 Woodbine Thoroughbred races registered \$405 million in all-sources handle. After dipping to \$394 million in 2014, it has reached \$438 million in 2015 and \$469 million last year.

Lawson noted there is a good chance the five-year agreement between the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation and Woodbine will be extended through 2021.

"We've spent the last couple of years trying to give people confidence and long-term certainty," Lawson said. "Woodbine has established a good relationship with OLG with long-term gaming licenses and

**“The good news is there will be a sustainable long-term business in Ontario.”**

—JIM LAWSON

leases at our properties both at Woodbine and our harness track, Mohawk. The good news is there will be a sustainable long-term business in Ontario; now we have to figure out how we're going to grow the industry so that we can attract younger people to come in and buy horses and participate. Our sales are gambling, and we need to have the horse supply and to be able to invest in marketing to bring people out. Everyone is trying to attract that new demographic of fans, whether it's pro golf or tennis or even baseball and football. We all share similar challenges."

Because of its desirable location and acreage, Woodbine is well-positioned. After a years-long process, the provincial government is expected later this year to

select a winning bid for a major casino that will be developed on the property, which could also lead to the addition of a hotel, conference center, and a tiered parking complex. WEG is also working with developers from Los Angeles and Montreal on an entertainment center featuring a 5,000-seat concert venue.

"We want to schedule concerts and festivals around the racing product and do joint marketing to make sure we get the people to flow to the site and give them exposure to horse racing," said Lawson. "We've finished off a master plan for the entire property that will give us the opportunity to use our real estate assets to contribute to the sustainability and security of both Thoroughbred and Standardbred racing for Woodbine going well beyond the term of the current agreement with the government."

Woodbine has not been shy about innovating nor planning for long-term innovation. At the Racetrack Industry Program symposium in Tucson last December, WEG executive Klaus Ebner noted Woodbine has instituted new wagering initiatives, including lowering the minimum wager on all bets and lowering takeout on win bets to 14.95%. He also said that Woodbine has responded to its customers by carding more turf races.

"We've seen a bump in wagering on grass races because of the large fields, competitive races, and better payouts," he said. "Plus, the higher the quality, the more it drives wagering."

Following an industry-wide move toward mega-race days, Woodbine is ex-

**Special Note For Sire Lists:**

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the states featured in this section (stallions that are dead or exported prior to 2013 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through February 19, 2017. As supplied to BloodHorse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., include adjusted money from Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Adjusted earnings are put on par with average North American earnings from the previous year. For example, the average North American purse per starter in 2016 is \$22,141 or 45% of the 2016 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 45% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 17%; Singapore by 65%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled stakes winners worldwide and any S.H.-foaled horses that won a N.H. stakes. \*Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ¶ indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).

\*AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX and COMPARABLE INDEX: Lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00; COMPARABLE INDEX indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX higher than their mares' COMPARABLE INDEX.

# 2017 LEADING SIRES IN ILLINOIS



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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2017 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2017 Earnings	2017 Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	<b>EL MEDWAR</b> (04, Elusive Quality), Hondo Ranch	Private	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Enchanted Facts, \$43,320)	<b>\$46,028</b>	16	0	0.92	1.21
2	<b>THREE HOUR NAP</b> (02, Afternoon Deelites), Oak Tree Farm	\$1,000	4/0	0/0	0/0	(Five Star Nap, \$13,330)	<b>\$24,990</b>	28	0	0.99	1.25
3	<b>DUCKHORN</b> (97, Not For Love)	N/A	1/1	0/0	0/0	(Plays in Peoria, \$16,100)	<b>\$16,100</b>	99	0	0.57	0.90
4	<b>ALLUVIAL</b> (02, Forestry), Casey Thoroughbred Farm	Private	3/1	0/0	0/0	(Bucklebury, \$10,800)	<b>\$11,144</b>	128	0	0.50	0.89
5	<b>ROAD RULER</b> (02, Unbridled's Song)	N/A	5/1	0/0	0/0	(Sheza Ruler, \$7,900)	<b>\$10,839</b>	106	0	0.87	0.76

panding its Queens Plate day into a two-day festival this year that coincides with Canada's 150th anniversary. It has also switched philosophies on weekend racing after concentrating big events on Sundays to avoid competing with major tracks in New York and California.

"We've found when we go head-to-head with them, people still like wagering on the Woodbine product," said Lawson. "It's been a good thing for us, so we're moving more toward Saturdays. We're also expanding our twilight racing on Fridays."

Rami Posner, a former executive in the telecommunications industry, is Woodbine's director of innovation, charged with developing fresh products and services to help attract new fans to the sport. The department started a program called Horse Racing 3.0 that, in partnership with Toronto's Ryerson University, goes outside the industry to partner with start-ups to help various aspects of the horse business.

One start-up is looking at a global transaction platform for buying and selling fractional shares of racehorses.

Said Posner, "What if someone is coming to the races for the first time and has a father or grandfather that is a fan, and now for a small investment could buy his father or grandfather a piece of a racehorse in a way that is easily deliverable and digestible to a young person? Or parents could buy a fraction of a horse for their young daughter and then bring her out to see the horse train. We are trying to re-frame ownership, looking at it a little differently. We are also looking at Virtual Reality, testing a theory that wagering in the future can use a jockey point-of-view, 360-degree Virtual Reality camera with real-time betting to help us attract a young audience. We're going down that path right now.

"We're also developing what I'll call Next Generation Handicapping. Historically, people don't want to share their picks because it changes the odds. But for young people today everything is transparent; they share everything on social media. So you can go online and follow someone and copy what they're doing and subscribe to their channel as they stream themselves. We've heard from young people that they don't want to learn to bet right away; they'd rather someone do it for them, hand-deliver it to them, and get them engaged and cheering for something and the learning part will come a bit later."

Woodbine has also started what it calls an Initiator App, whereby its employees, when outside of work, can engage people who express interest in the racetrack and gather their name and email address. The track will contact them and offer a concierge-type experience to them if they visit the track, including visits to the race-caller's booth or starting gate or paddock, with food discounts.



MICHAEL BURNS

Woodbine is slated to run 133 days in 2017

"We need people to come out and experience the live races," said Posner. "We try to do things that are revenue-generating."

Having navigated through dark days, Ontario has much work still to do in shoring up its breeding industry, and racing here faces the same challenges it does throughout the continent. But a top-class facility, ample real estate, and forward-looking leadership, there is cause for optimism.

"We see ourselves as stewards of this wonderful property that E.P. Taylor left as a legacy to horse racing," said Lawson. "The industry is at a crossroads, and we have passionate people who must decide how to take the assets we have and use them to fulfill the dream of sustaining and having the horse industry thrive. The world has changed, and we're in a new landscape. I think we're ahead of the curve because of our assets, so I'm positive, but this is an industry that can't sit still. We have to be innovative and be prepared to change because the status quo is not going to cut it." **BH**