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CONTACT: JASON REYNOLDS

jreynolds@flhorsepark.com

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried Appoints Four Florida Horse Park Board Members

TALLAHASSEE — Today, Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried announced four new appointments to the Florida Agriculture Center and Horse Park Board.

“With a population of over 385,000 horses, Florida is home to nearly every breed of horse,” said Commissioner Nikki Fried. “Helping sustain an \$11.7 billion annual economic impact, our equine sector is a vital part of our state's agricultural industry. I'm proud to appoint Mary Phelps, Chester Bishop, Doug Holder, and Angela Palacios to the Florida Horse Park Board. Their knowledge and extensive experience will be a great addition to this organization.”

“I am so proud of the addition of these outstanding new board members,” said Carol Dover, Florida Horse Park Board Chair. “I look forward to serving alongside them as we continue to enhance the mission of the Horse Park and build on the great our momentum in developing an international competition facility that brings people from all over the world to Central Florida.”

Mary Phelps — Ms. Phelps created the website horsesdaily.com in 1997; it is the longest continually operating website on equestrian sport worldwide. She is a long-time member of the International Alliance of Equestrian Journalists and has covered every major equestrian event in the US and Europe. Phelps is also an equine insurance specialist and underwriter for Markel Corp, writing equine mortality, property, and liability. She is also an FEI competitor in the sport of Combined Driving and, in 2019, she represented the US in Kisber, Hungary. There, she won a gold medal in the Cones Phase for Pony Pair and finished 12th overall in her division that represented 16 countries. Outside of her significant equestrian accomplishments, Ms. Phelps is active in her community as a member of the Ocala Chamber of Commerce.

Chester A. Bishop — Mr. Bishop has a rich history with horses as a horse owner and breeder for more than 15 years. He currently serves as Vice President of the Florida Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association. Mr. Bishop is also president and CEO of SuRealty Title, Inc. with

locations in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami Dade Counties. He also serves as the Chairman of Housing Foundation of America, Inc. a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization that also services the Tri County area. Bishop has been a long-time advocate for affordable housing and first-time home ownership in South Florida, conducting numerous workshops and seminars on local, state, and federal housing grant programs. He has provided leadership and support services on numerous housing boards and committee.

Doug Holder – Mr. Holder is an original partner of The Legis Group, a consulting and lobbying firm servicing the Legislative, Executive, and Cabinet branches of state and federal government. Representative Holder previously served the constituents of Sarasota County in the Florida House of Representatives from 2006 – 2014, where he served as Chairman of the Sarasota delegation and Chairman of the Economic Development and Tourism subcommittee. Horses have always been a part of Mr. Holder's life and he looks forward to serving the Florida Agriculture Center and Horse Park.

Angela Palacios – Ms. Palacios has spent more than 13 years with Lambholm South, the well-known major thoroughbred farm in Marion County. As a member of the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association, Ms. Palacios has a strong passion for Florida's equine industry, which is vital to the culture and economy of Florida. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and will graduate from Barry University Law School in May of 2021. She also currently serves as a Legal Intern with the United States Attorney's Office. Her goals are to embrace the treasure that is the Florida Horse Park and engage people not just in the equine industry but across the greater community as well.

About the Florida Horse Park: The Florida Agriculture Center and Horse Park is a 500-acre, multipurpose facility and one of Central Florida's premiere venues for equine, agricultural, educational, and sporting events. Its mission is to develop an international equine competition facility that encompasses all breeds and disciplines, while advancing agriculture and equine education, and to provide the state and community with a recreational facility capable of hosting equestrian and non-equestrian events.

Visit <https://flhorsepark.com/> to learn more about the Florida Agriculture Center and Horse Park.

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