Dr. Rebecca Husted

Educator, Facilitator, Consultant

Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue, Inc.

The Unwritten Contract: Building Social License in Equine Rescue




TLAER









HARD QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES:



Circa 2007 Photo by Tori Miller, NC



Circa 2010

WHAT DO OTHERS THINK ABOUT WHAT WE ARE DOING??


180 Degree Change in Training Direction (2013)
$18,000 “RESQUIP” TLAER Mannequin



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT, NOW WE CAN PRACTICE UNTIL YOU CAN’T GET IT WRONG!

What Is Social License?

Social License automatically exists when an organization, effort, project, or entity has **ongoing approval** within the local/global community and other stakeholders, with broad social acceptance.

Social License is rooted in beliefs, perceptions and opinions held by the employees, volunteers, other populations and stakeholders about the entity - it is granted by the community.

It is intangible, unless an effort is made to measure these beliefs, opinions and perceptions.

SLO is dynamic / non-permanent because beliefs, opinions and perceptions are *subject to change* as new information is acquired. Hence - *Social License is earned, and must be maintained*.

- Unwritten, non-legally binding contract
- Society 'gives' an entity the right to operate
- About building trust and that members behave ethically
- We ALL have responsibility to cultivate positive social license

Public Information & Social License become welded together in disasters.

TIMES UNION

NEWS

‘It should not happen again’: State reviews fire safety after deadly Saratoga fire

Gaming Commission visits state's 10 tracks to review protocols after barn fire in Saratoga Springs

By **Wendy Liberatore**, *Staff Writer*
Aug 12, 2026



Member, Supervisor Sarah Burger’s Horse Racing Fire Safety & Prevention Committee

https://www.saratogacountyny.gov/commissions-and-authorities/horse-racing-fire-safety-committee/

6 NEWS WRGB ALBANY | NEWS | WEATHER | BUFFALO PLUS | COMMUNITY | MONEY | WATCH

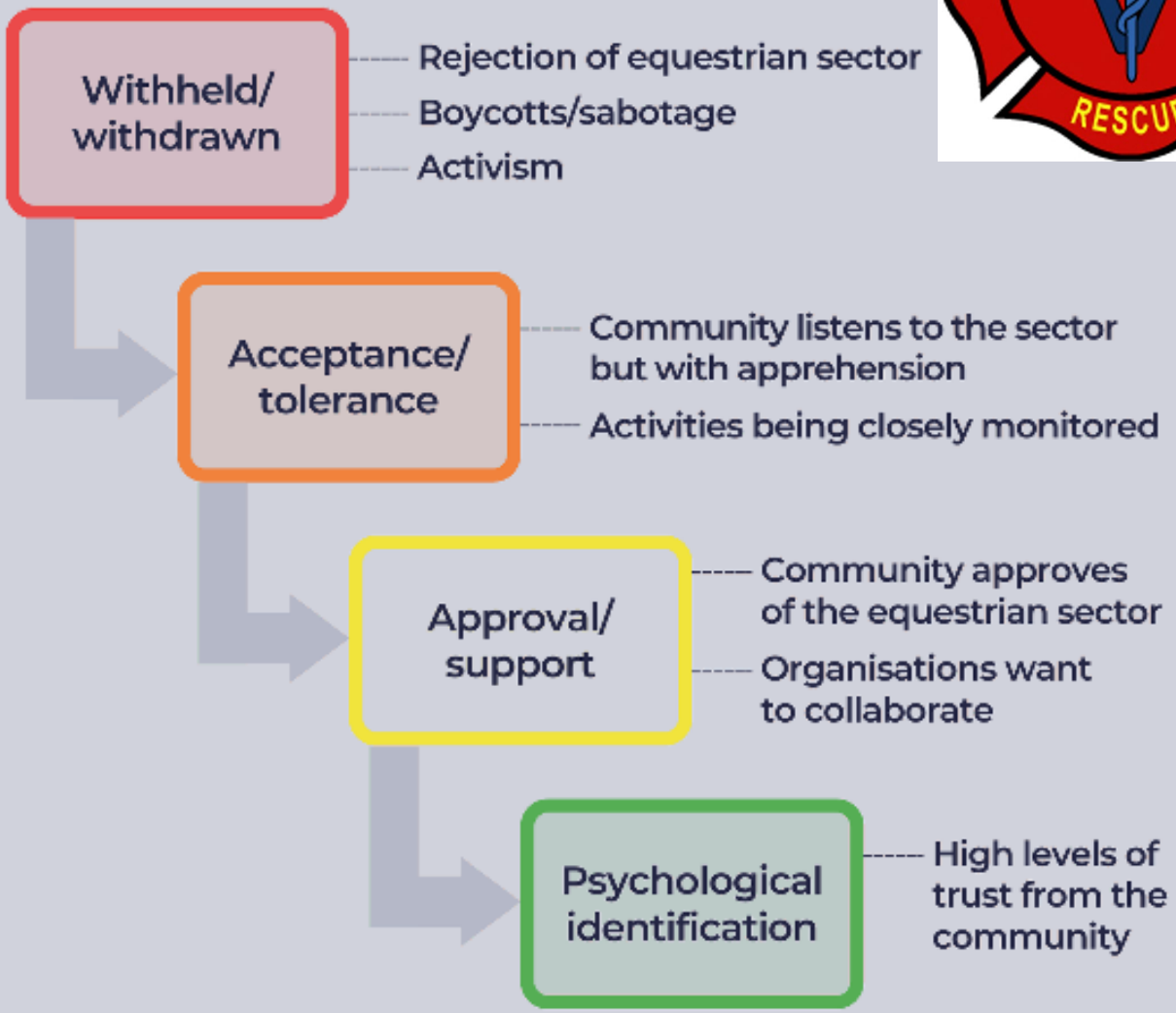
PETA urges police probe after fire kills 17 horses at Saratoga harness track

by Sean Cavanaugh | Wed, August 12, 2026 at 10:30 PM



WRGB

Levels of Social License



Source: World Horse Welfare





EXAMPLE:

Currently, EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES and THERAPY has Excellent and Positive SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)

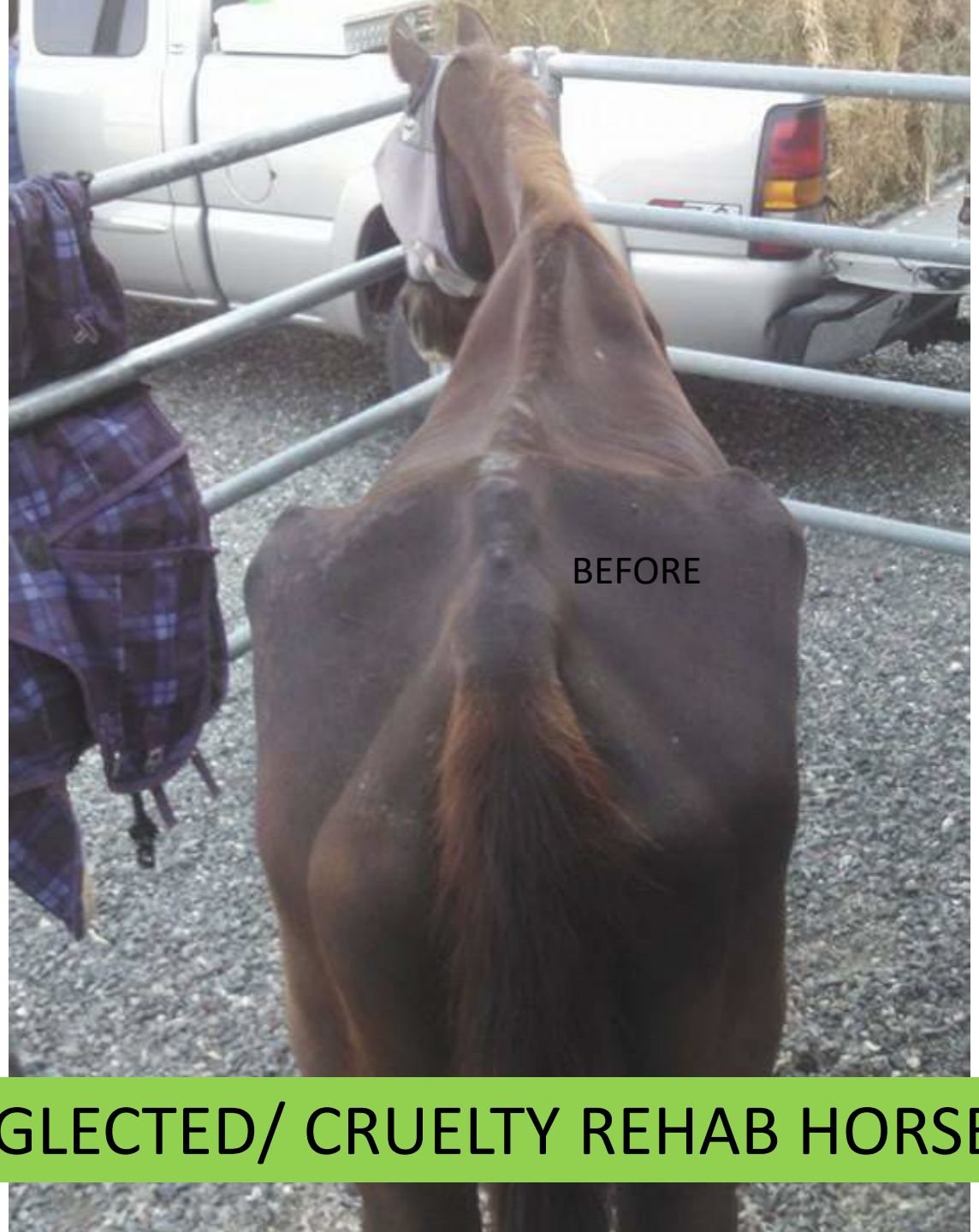


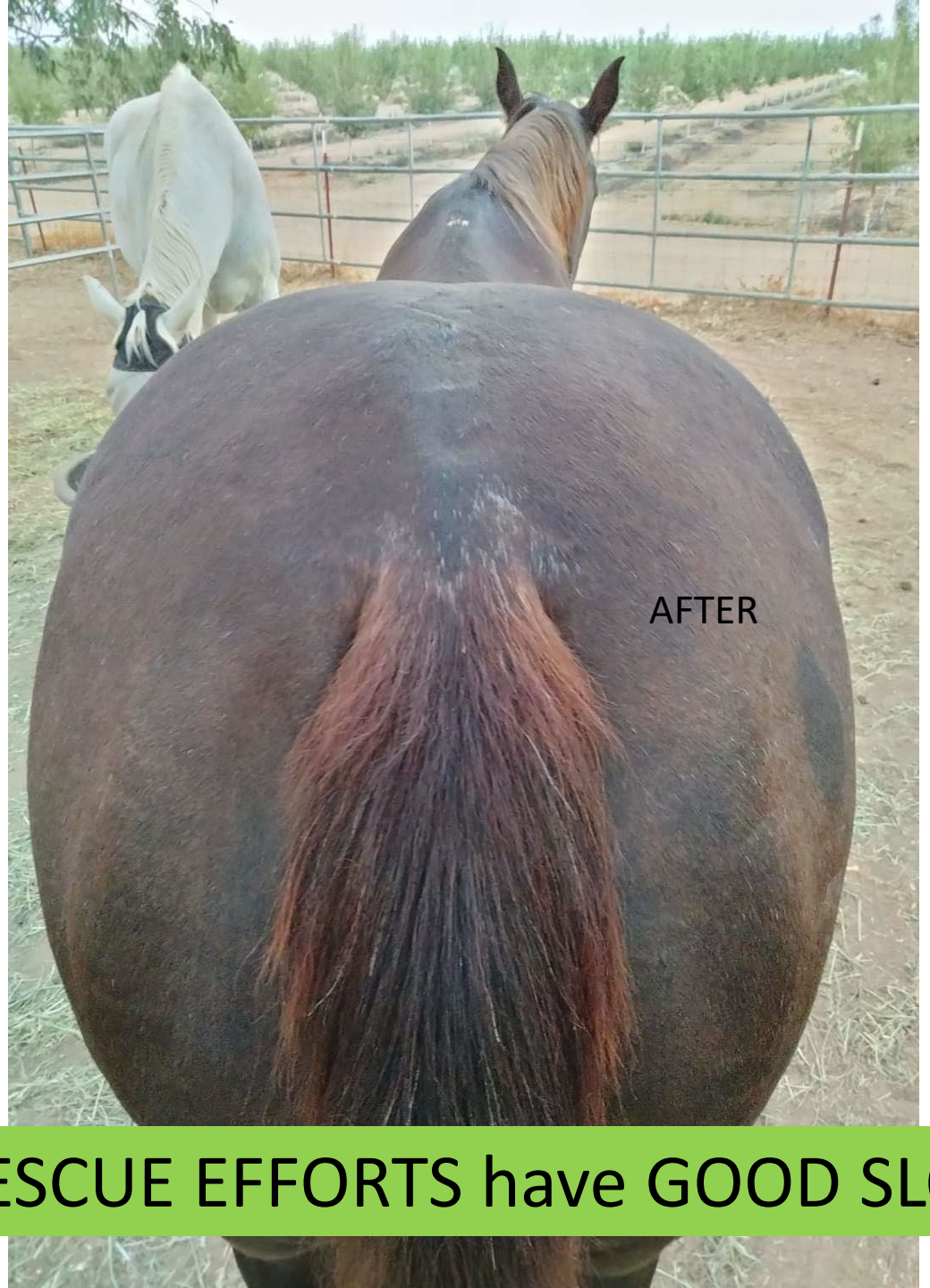




Random photos pulled from Path International website and FB page


Photos By
Dr. Rebecca Husted
EXAMPLE:
CHIDREN RIDING PROGRAMS have SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)





NEGLECTED/ CRUELTY REHAB HORSE RESCUE EFFORTS have GOOD SLO



STARVATION HORSE REHAB EFFORTS have GOOD SLO





NEGLECT HORSE REHAB EFFORTS have GOOD SLO





OBVIOUSLY ABUSED HORSE RESCUE EFFORTS have GOOD SLO

- Society at large has “re-imagined” the horse thru media and TV, public recognizes their sentience (and past abuses).

- Society no longer considers the horse a servant, comrade-in-arms, or even a worker in most areas. *Questions of whether they should be ridden, driven or even owned are being asked*.

- The responsibility for Social License to Operate **rests with ALL people who care for or are involved with horses**, not just organizations, owners, riders or breeders. **WE are the INDUSTRY**.

- ESPECIALLY when animals are part of a **BUSINESS MODEL** – SLO has to be considered with primary importance. Money changes things!

What are some common key perceptions (-) about the horse rescue "business" that affect our social license to operate?

- Rescues are it for the money – they pay for their own house, cars, food, vacations with donations
- "They" take advantage of their wealthy donors
- Don't communicate well – doesn't answer the phone
- Volunteers don't know anything about the horses
- "They" are begging for $ - part of the "flip it" rescues
- **Founder's Syndrome – just one example**
- Too many horses, too little land
- Horses often are kept alive WAY too long
- One "special" horse they spend 20k to "save it" where they could better use that money on more saves, etc.
- THE "OTHER" HORSE RESCUE IN TOWN IS "BAD"

WHAT CAN WE DO TO FIGHT THESE PERCEPTIONS?

NONPROFIT FOUNDER'S SYNDROME

The intersection of a female non-profit founder, founder's syndrome, and a horse rescue represents a distinct, well-documented phenomenon in the animal welfare sector. While non-profit founder's syndrome is a general organizational challenge, it takes on highly specific—and sometimes devastating—dynamics within the equine rescue community.







EXAMPLES:

EQUESTRIAN SPORTS have SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)





Random photos pulled from social media and Google







EXAMPLES:

EQUESTRIAN SPORTS have SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)







Random photos pulled from social media and Google





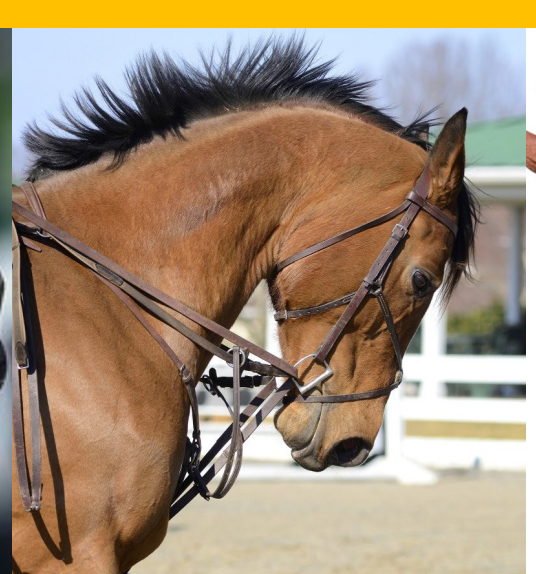


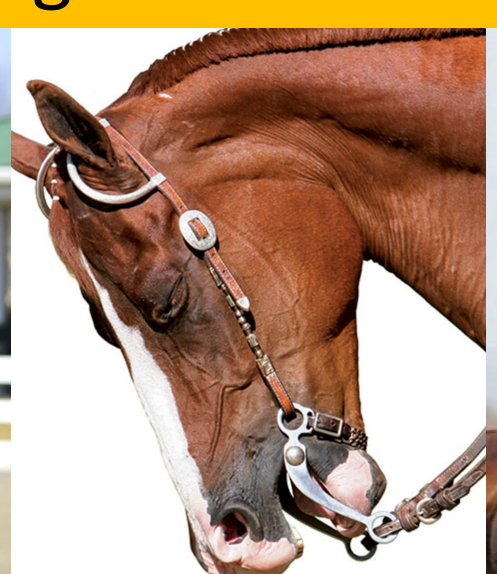
EXAMPLES:

Random photos pulled from social media and Google

Current Issues Affecting SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)











AP

WORLD U.S. POLITICS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS SCIENCE NEWSLETTERS QUIZZES M

Oregon school shooting Katie Zacharia Southern California fire Josh Jacobs Timothy Busfield

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE

Updated 3:26 PM EDT, October 14, 2026

U.S. NEWS

New York to ban Central Park's horse-drawn carriages after teen's death



Current Issues Affecting SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)

BBC

Teenager dies in horse-drawn carriage accident in New York

18 June 2026

Share Save Add as preferred on Google

Chris Graham



An 18-year-old man has died after falling from a horse-drawn carriage in New York City, police have said.

The teenager, identified locally as a tourist from India, was riding on the





EXAMPLES:

Have CHALLENGES to their SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)





Random photos pulled from social media and Google

WHEN YOU (TRY TO) IGNORE IT.

Thoroughbred Racing Commentary

SEARCH

TRC GLOBAL RANKINGS | Jockeys, Owners and Trainers | Breeding and Sales | Racing | Welfare

Racing

NEXT ARTICLE

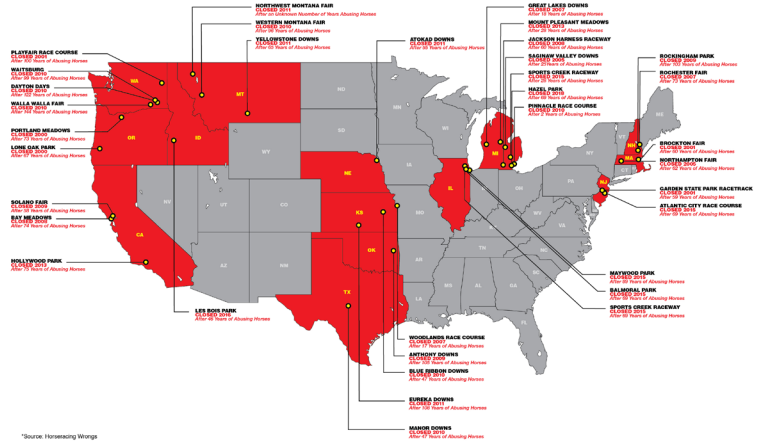
Racing's 'social license' to operate: what can we do to keep it sustainable?

Daniel Ross | MAY 08, 2019 | 2

SHARE



SHUTTERED RACETRACKS SINCE 2000



*Source: Horseracing Wrongs

THE STRAIGHT
RACING | WAGERING | BREEDING

As data reveals that wagering continues to fall on racing in the United States, the American industry is also confronting a drop in the amount of prize money paid out.

BY BREN O'BRIEN • WAGERING • JANUARY 6, 2026

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE HORSE INDUSTRY? HOW DOES IT AFFECT RESCUES?



Tripadvisor

Tucson | Things to Do | Hotels | Restaurants | Cruises | Forums

United States > Arizona (AZ) > Tucson > Things to Do in Tucson > Rillito Park Horse Racetrack

See all things to do

Rillito Park Horse Racetrack

Unclaimed

4.3 ●●●●◐ (24 reviews) #104 of 525 things to do in Tucson



About

Historical landmark for quarter horse racing for 50 year.

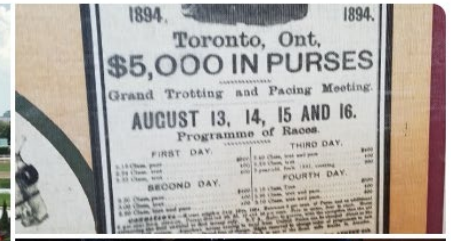
This business does not currently meet Tripadvisor's Animal Welfare Policy.

Woodbine Racetrack

Save | Review

3.6 ●●●◐○ (239 reviews) #135 of 1,145 things to do in Toronto







Hours

Closed now

Tuesday Closed

impacted by COVID-19. Please visit Woodbine.com for more information. Woodbine Racetrack is not affiliated with Casino Woodbine. Reviews and comments for the casino should be ...

Read more

Duration: < 1 hour

This business does not currently meet Tripadvisor's Animal Welfare Policy.

Suggest edits to improve what we show

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HORSE INDUSTRY? HOW DOES IT AFFECT RESCUES?





Photo taken April 22, 2020 -

EXAMPLE:

Have (essentially) LOST their SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)





Random photos pulled from social media and Google





Elephant Acts
Retired 2016

Went out of
business in 2017

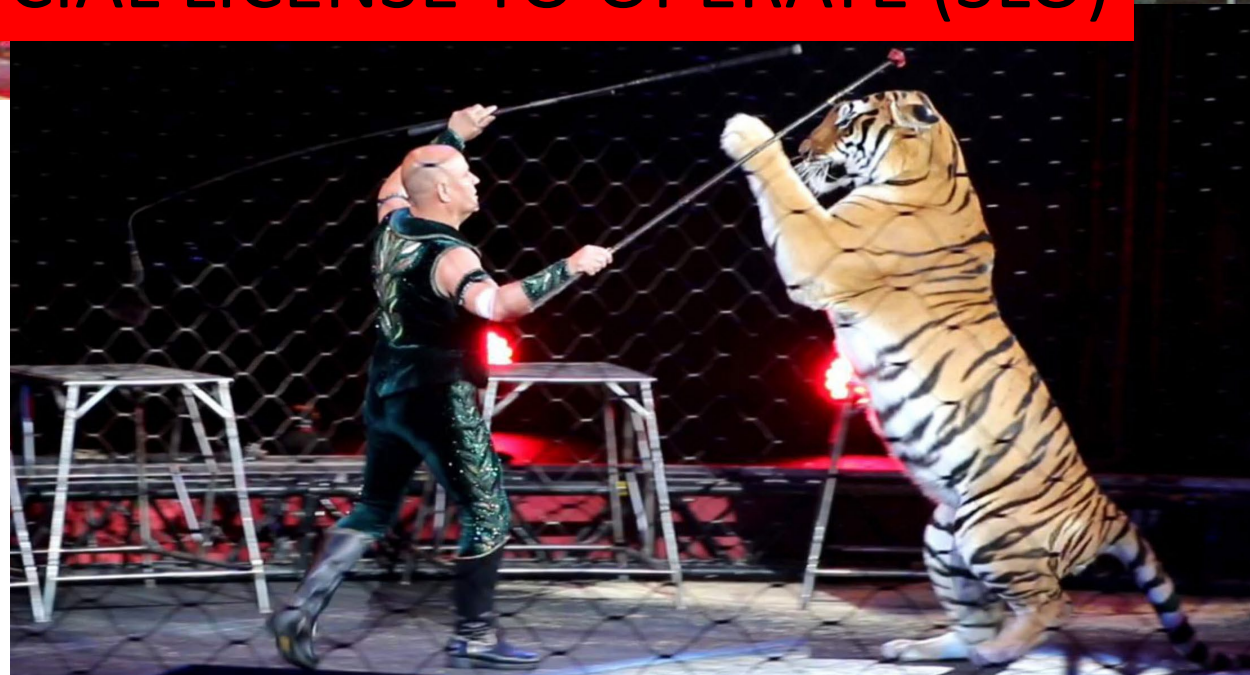
Finally COMPLETELY LOST their SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE (SLO)

Yes, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus is back in business after closing in 2017, but it's a reimagined, animal-free show featuring human performers, technology like VR, and high-energy acrobatics, returning after a hiatus due to declining sales and animal welfare concerns.



Key Points:

- **Original Closure (2017):** The original circus closed after 146 years, citing high costs, changing tastes, and pressure from animal rights groups after phasing out elephants.
- **Return (2023):** A new version debuted in 2023, focusing on human talent, elaborate sets, and technology, with no animal acts.
- **Current Status:** The circus continues to tour with its new, animal-free format, aiming to attract modern audiences.



SO - WHAT CAN HORSE ADVOCATES DO?

Potentiate And Promote POSITIVE INTERACTIONS With Staff, Volunteers, Public & The Horses where possible.

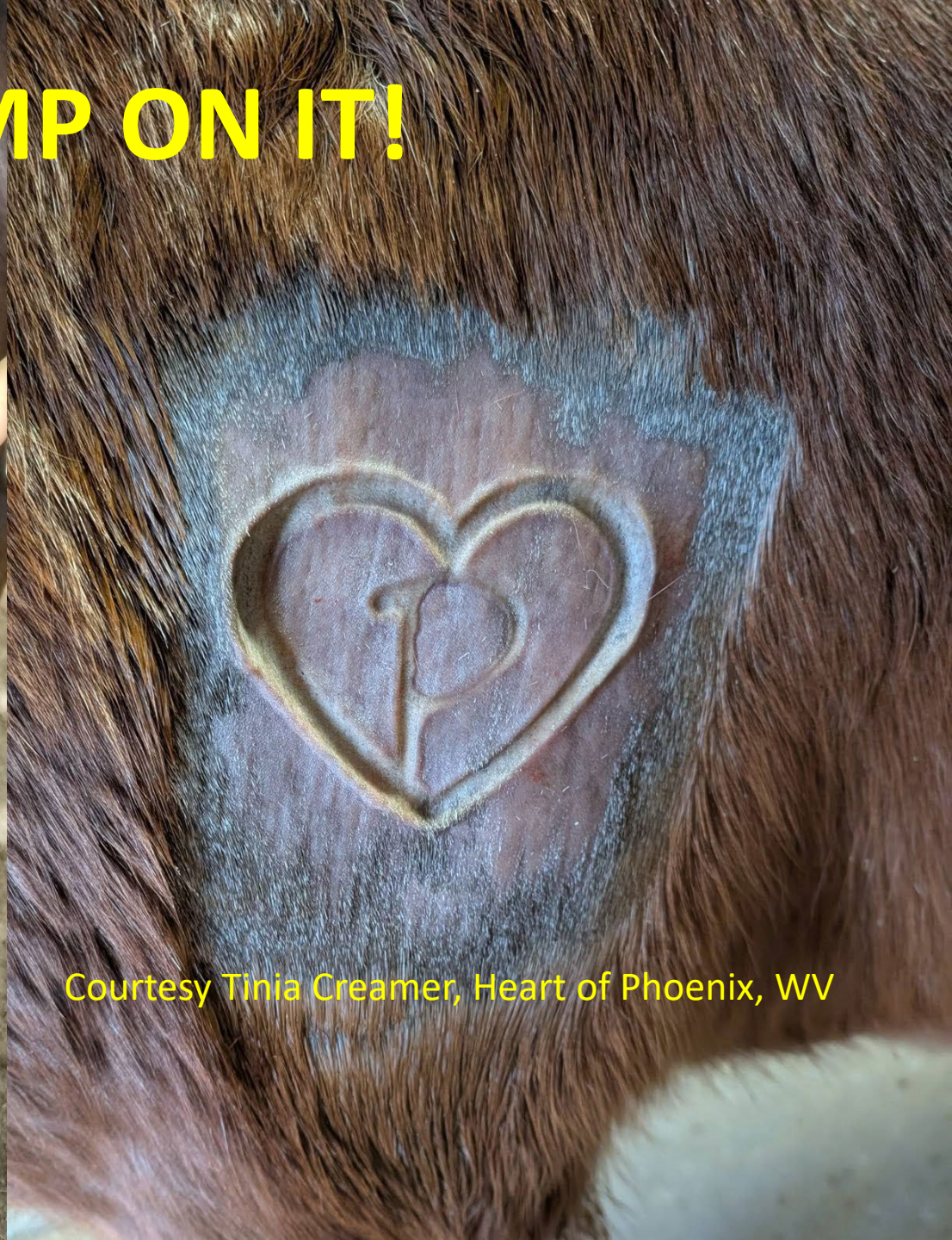
Learn, Teach And Practice **Real Aspects** Of Equine Welfare (Euthanasia & Good Welfare Decisions, Un- & Ridden Horses in Pain, Body Condition Scoring, Fear Scoring, Quality of Life)

Improve PUBLIC INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS to present factual information & education in negative situations.

PUT YOUR STAMP ON IT!



Courtesy Dr. Rebecca Husted, TLAER, Inc, GA.



Courtesy Tinia Creamer, Heart of Phoenix, WV

DO YOU EDUCATE ABOUT FAKE RESCUES, HOARDERS, SCAMS and EQUINE WELFARE?

AI Overview

When looking at negative reviews and criticisms surrounding horse rescues, the complaints generally fall into two major categories: operational/financial scams and poor animal welfare. In recent years, the rise of "amateur rescues" on social media has significantly accelerated these bad reviews and public backlash.

The most common red flags and criticisms highlighted in bad reviews of horse rescues include:

1. The "Bail Out" and "Horse Flipping" Scam

Many highly criticized operations present a facade of being a legitimate non-profit rescue but are actually engaged in a practice called "horse flipping".

- **The Tactic:** They post emotional, darkened videos on TikTok, Facebook, or Instagram showing a horse in a sales barn or auction corner. They claim the horse is in the "slaughter pipeline" and ask the public to donate money to "bail them out". YouTube · Colton Woods +1
- **The Criticism:** Industry experts note that these horses are often young, healthy, and desirable—not actually bound for slaughter. The operators use public donations to buy the horses, only to flip them later for a pure profit, essentially running a regular sales business funded entirely by unsuspecting donors. YouTube · Colton Woods +1

2. Exploitation and Social Media Clout

A growing point of consensus in online equine communities, such as discussions on the Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue (TLAER) group and the r/Horses subreddit, is that many amateur rescues prioritize social media engagement over actual animal welfare. Reddit · r/Horses +1

- **Prolonging Suffering:** Some rescues are criticized for keeping severely deformed or terminally ill animals alive simply because they generate massive donations, merchandise sales, and views. Critics call this "hoarding disguised as rescue". United Horse Coalition +1

How Fake Rescues Operate

- **The "Slaughter Pipeline" Myth:** They exploit public fears by claiming healthy or ordinary sales-barn horses are minutes away from being shipped to slaughter, staging urgent countdown clocks and emotional appeals. United Horse Coalition +2
- **Visual Manipulation:** They use techniques like darkening photos, positioning a horse's head downward in a corner, and playing sad background music to maximize impulse donations. United Horse Coalition +2
- **For-Profit Flipping:** Instead of rehabilitating animals, they buy horses, do little to no work, and resell them at high profit margins using other people's money. YouTube · Raleigh Link +1
- **Financial Complicity:** Many viral "kill-pen" operations work directly with meat-buyers, creating an endless cycle where rescue ransom money enriches the dealers and drives up auction prices. United Horse Coalition +2
- **Hoarding and Fraud:** Some fronts never actually house the animals they fundraise for, operating instead as neglected animal hoarders or pocketing funds for personal expenses. Opinions on Reddit reflect a consensus that these scams feature excessive personal enrichment, poor transparency, and aggressive online suppression of critics. Facebook +3

Red Flags of a Scam Rescue

- **Constant Urgency:** Relying strictly on shock value, guilt trips, and life-or-death countdowns rather than steady educational updates. United Horse Coalition +1
- **No Transparency:** Refusing visitors, failing to show transparent vet records or quarantine procedures, and hiding the physical location of the animals. Reddit · r/Equestrian +1
- **Basic Needs Fundraising:** Constantly begging for fundamental items like basic fencing, water buckets, or shelter basics that a functioning facility should already possess. Facebook
- **Unregistered Status:** Operating without official 501(c)(3) nonprofit registration while falsely claiming status to donors.

Ocala Horse Rescue Owners Arrested for Animal Cruelty, 69 Animals Seized

Investigations reportedly found dozens of animals in various degrees of neglect.

By Zachary Moore | April 7, 2026 10:29 am

On November 4, 2025, Detective McClaskey and Agriculture Investigator Justin McClure responded to Happy Valley Horse Rescue, located at 4250 NW 95th Avenue Road, Ocala, in reference to an anonymous complaint about neglected horses. Upon arrival, contact was made with Palacio and Chaux, who agreed to provide a tour of the property and horses. Through their investigation, investigators found that most of the horses were underweight, with bony structures visible, hooves in deplorable condition, and some appearing to be in pain while walking. The stalls in the barn had not been cleared of excrement and soiled bedding for an extended period of time. When confronted about the conditions, Palacio and Chaux could not explain the neglect and were unable to provide a total number of horses on the property. A total of 54 horses were found on the property.

On November 5 and 6, 2025, MCSO personnel executed a search and seizure warrant at Happy Valley Horse Rescue for a total of 69 horses. While at the location, an additional 17 horses were discovered on the neighboring property that showed similar signs of neglect. These horses were also in the care of Chaux. An equine veterinarian examined the body conditions of the horses on a scale from 1 to 9 (1 being emaciated and 9 being obese). He assigned a score of 1 or 2 to 20 of the horses and a score of 3 to 16 of them. Two of the horses were in such poor condition that medical professionals determined that euthanasia was the most humane option.

Palacio and Chaux were placed under arrest and transported to the Marion County Jail, where they are held with bonds of $71,000 each.

After the horses were seized, they were transported to the MCSO Agriculture Investigations Farm for treatment and care, and they have been successfully rehabilitated. MCSO would also like to extend our gratitude to our community partners and the horse rescues who have worked alongside us to provide care and have now taken custody of the horses.







WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER – **THIS KIND OF THING AFFECTS ALL OF US.**

Meadow Haven Horse Rescue

Favorite

Donate | Giving Basket is Disabled

Mission

Mission not available

SMILEY TX | EIN: 06-1667945

Is this your nonprofit?

501(c)(3) organization

755 COUNTY ROAD 212, SMILEY TX 78159-5921

URL not available

Beacon Report

●●●● Great ●●●● Good ●●●● Needs Improvem

Accountability & Finance
- ○○○○ Accountability
- ○○○○ Financial Health
- ---- Revenue & Expenses

Impact & Measurement
- ○○○○ Measurement
- ○○○○ Learning
- ○○○○ Impact

- ○○○○ Leadership
- ○○○○ Governance
- ○○○○ Program Planning

- ○○○○ Compensation Practices
- ○○○○ Workplace Policies
- ---- Salary Information

○○○○ Accountability | ○○○○ Financial Health | ---- Revenue & Expenses

Unscored

Meadow Haven Horse Rescue cannot be scored on Accountability because Charity Navigator has not received the public data required to evaluate this area.

Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

Organizations who have filed a 990-N (e-Postcard) annual electronic notice. Most small organizations that receive less than $50,000 fall into this category.

Tax Year 2025 Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

Tax Period:
2025 (01/01/2025-12/31/2025)

EIN:
06-1667945

Organization Name (Doing Business as):
MEADOW HAVEN HORSE RESCUE

Mailing Address:
755 COUNTY ROAD 212
SMILEY, TX 781595921
United States

Principal Officer's Name and Address:
Darla Cherry
755 County Rd
Smiley, TX 78159
United States

Gross receipts not greater than:
$50,000

Organization has terminated:
No

Website URL:
www.meadowhavenrescue.com

Tax Year 2024 Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

Tax Year 2023 Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

Tax Year 2022 Form 990-N (e-Postcard)

PUBLIC INFORMATION STANCE

- CAN YOU GET A TRAINED PIO on your team?
- DO YOU USE A THOUGHT PROCESS before you post to social media?
- PROVIDE FACTUAL INFORMATION – IT WON'T PREVENT THEM FROM MAKING UP THEIR OWN STORIES - but it limits damage.
- For HARD things - PROVIDE AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW for media.
- Stick to what you know – tell the truth, be as transparent as you can.
- THERE IS NOTHING that you can do about the nasty comments on your posts - BUT YOU CAN RESPOND PROFESSIONALLY TO POSITIVE and NEGATIVE COMMENTS ON SOCIALS.
- Make sure you ALWAYS respond to reviews of your rescue (+ and -)



HOW OFTEN DO YOU CHECK AND RESPOND TO ONLINE COMMENTS AND RATINGS?

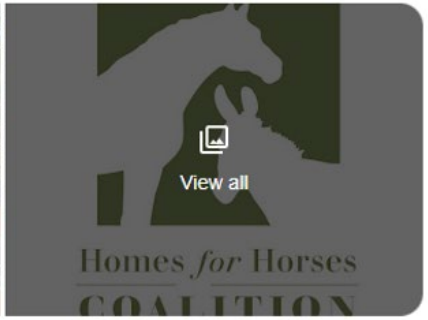
GOOD or BAD – you need to INTERACT!

Example of Reviews – take a look at YOURSELF

Homes for Horses Coalition
4.7 ★ (3) · Non-profit organization

Overview | Reviews | Photos





Website | Directions | Save | Share | Call

900 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003



4.7 ★★★★½ · 3 Reviews

(720) 588-3072

Google review summary

5
4
3
2
1

4.7
★★★★½
(3)

More Google reviews

Rate and Review on Google





ReDux Equine Rescue Inc.

11K followers • 441 following

ReDux Rescue is a 501c3 horse rescue — we Rescue, Rehabilitate, Reeducate and Rehome horses in need. Follow along to see our journ

Nonprofit organization | ReDuxRescue | (762) 499-2177

Donate | Message

All | About | Reels | Photos | Followers | More

Details

Not yet rated (0 reviews)

204 Mitchell Farm Road, Colbert, GA, United States, 30628

Links

reduxrescue.org

Contact info

ReDuxRescue

(762) 499-2177

info@reduxrescue.org

ReDux Equine Rescue Inc.

Featured

ReDux Equine Rescue Inc.
September 24 at 9:25 PM

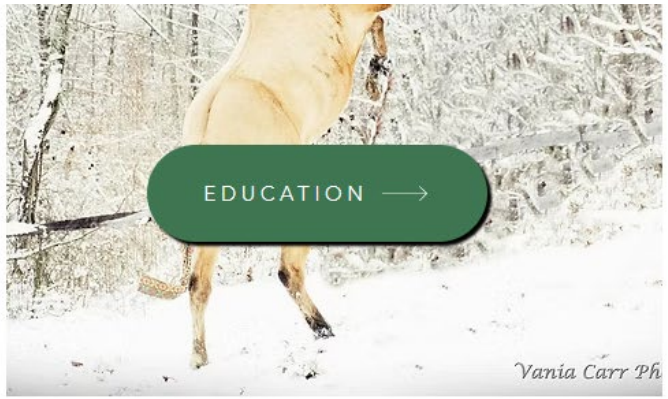
We had so many horses who wanted to meet Joi!

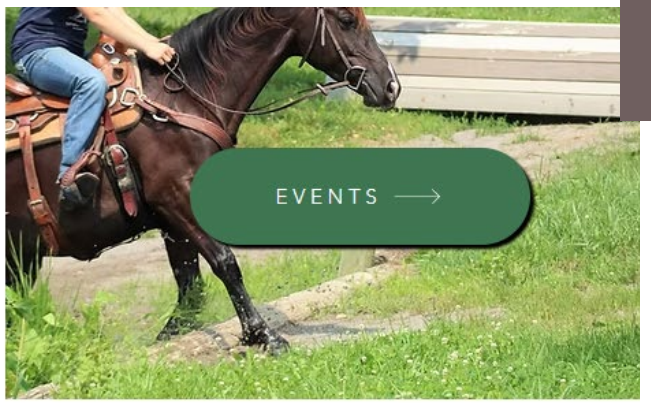


FACEBOOK
A beautiful first meet and greet.

Posts

DOING ALL THE RIGHT THINGS? THEN - SHOUT ABOUT IT!





Platinum Transparency 2026 Candid.

Charity Navigator ✦ FOUR-STAR ✦

Heart of Phoenix Rescue is the most impactful equine advocacy organization in Appalachia / EIN: 45-4421742 /
Thoroughbred Aftercare Accredited /
Candid PLATINUM Award / 4 STARs on Charity Navigator /
TCA Charities Grantee /
Top Rated Great Non-Profits Charity / ASPCA Right Horse Partner /
Homes for Horses Coalition Member
View our 990 Return here
See our Board and Officers here

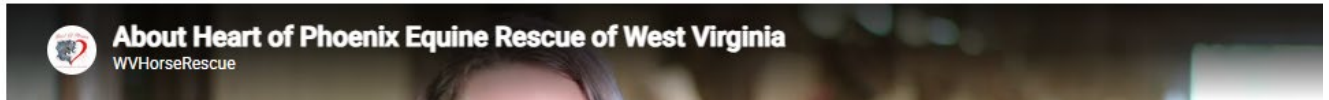
Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance Accredited Organization

TCA Thoroughbred Charities of America 2024 Grantee

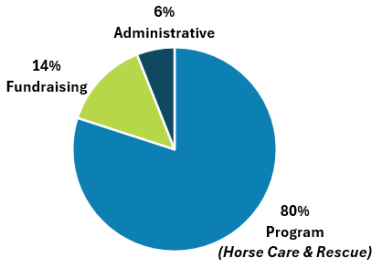


Standardbred Transition Alliance 2025 Accredited Organization

Newsletter Sign Up | Wish List | SHOP SHIRTS



Gentle Giants Current Breakdown of Funds



2024
- Gentle Giants Form 990
- Gentle Giants Audit

2023
- Gentle Giants Form 990
- Gentle Giants Audit

2022
- Gentle Giants Form 990

Platinum Transparency 2026 Candid. | Charity Navigator Four Star Charity | GreatNonprofits 2026 Top-Rated Nonprofit | Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries Accredited | CFC | Maryland Horse Council | Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries Outstanding Sanctuary Award Winner 2022

Charity Navigator — Search by Charity or Cause — Discover Charities | Donor Basics | About Us

Colorado Horse Rescue Network

Donate — Giving Basket is Disabled

Mission

Colorado Horse Rescue Network was established in 2013 after several founding members saw the need for a state-wide organization to help needy equines. CHRN has a central facility Rush, CO and a network of foster homes all over the state. We actively rescue horses from a variety of situations to prevent them from entering the slaughter pipeline or...
SHOW MORE

RUSH CO | EIN: 47-2431562
Is this your nonprofit?
501(c)(3) organization
38705 BIG SPRINGS RD, RUSH CO 80833-9737
https://www.coloradohorserescuenetwork.com/
720-270-5197

85%
Three-Star Charity

1 of 4 BEACONS COMPLETED
- ✓ Accountability & Finance
- ○ Impact & Measurement
- ○ Leadership & Planning
- ○ Culture & Compensation

Beacon Report

●●●● Great ●●●● Good ●●●● Needs Improvement ●●●● Poor ○○○○ Incomplete ---- Additional Information

Accountability & Finance	Impact & Measurement	Leadership & Planning	Culture & Compensation
●●●● Accountability	○○○○ Measurement	○○○○ Leadership	○○○○ Compensation Practices
●●●● Financial Health	○○○○ Learning	●●●● Governance	○○○○ Workplace Policies
---- Revenue & Expenses	○○○○ Impact	○○○○ Program Planning	---- Salary Information

Bad Reviews & Red Flags

While **Meadow Haven Horse Rescue and Sanctuary** in Smiley, Texas historically maintained positive public reviews for its 20 years of rescue work, user reviews and ratings have split dramatically following a severe December 2025 animal cruelty raid and ongoing criminal prosecution.

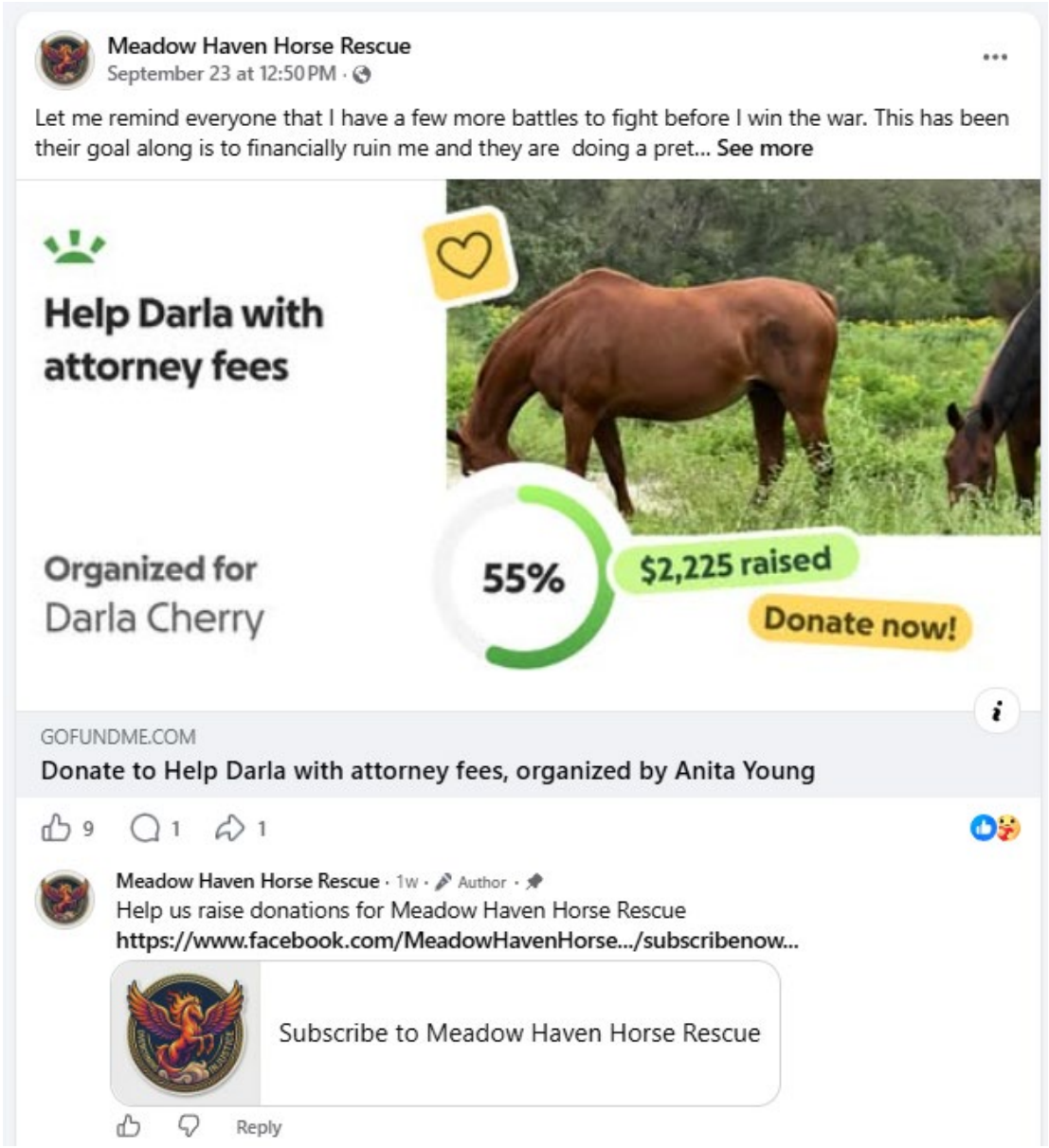
Review Sentiment and Summary

Historically, supporters and long-time adopters praised the facility, writing that it was a "true caring sanctuary". However, recent reviews are highly critical. Complainants highlight the horrific state of the facilities, noting that animals were allegedly starving and dying on-site.

Animal Seizure and Legal Controversies

The sanctuary became the subject of intense controversy following a major law enforcement raid:

- **The December 2025 Raid:** The Gonzales County Sheriff's Office, local constables, and the American Humane Society executed a search and seizure warrant. Authorities reported finding horses in deplorable, severely malnourished conditions with overgrown hooves and pens covered in feces. WOAI +2
- **Mass Seizure and Euthanasia:** Investigators seized 89 animals (including horses, donkeys, goats, and pigs). At least two on-site veterinarians determined that the animals' suffering was so advanced that the only humane path forward was immediate euthanasia; **9 horses and 1 donkey were put down on the property.** WOAI +1
- **The Owner's Defense:** Founder and president Darla Cherry strongly pushed back against the authorities. She alleged that investigators threatened to take her personal dogs to force her compliance and claimed that the euthanized horses still had a high quality of life under medical recovery. kens5.com +4
- **Current Status:** As of late 2026, Darla Cherry is facing **eight misdemeanor and eight felony livestock cruelty charges**. The court case remains ongoing with continuances set through October and November 2026, and she maintains her legal innocence. Facebook



Search for tax exempt organizations

Individuals

Businesses and self-employed

Charities and nonprofits

- Exempt organization types
- Lifecycle of an exempt organization
- Annual filing and forms
- Charitable contributions
- Search for charities
- Education sessions
- Stay Exempt

International taxpayers

Governmental liaisons

Federal, state and local

The Tax Exempt Organization Search Tool

You can check an organization's:

- Eligibility to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions
- Review information about the organization's tax-exempt status and filings.

Search for Tax Exempt Organizations

About the Tax Exempt Organization Search Tool

The online search tool allows you to search for an organization's tax exempt status ar

- Form 990 series returns
- Form 990-N (e-Postcard)
- Pub. 78 data
- Automatic revocation of exemption list
- Determination letters

Tips for using the search tool

Choose a database

Search by employer identification number (EIN) or organization name



DEMONSTRATE YOUR LEGITAMACY

- Legit 501c3 Status? IRS registration?
- Accreditation(s)?
- Charity Navigator/ GuideStar/ GiveWell rating?
- Partner Organizations?
- Membership in Related Organizations?
- Long Term Planning & Retirement of Founder?
- Continuing Education?







KEYS TO PIO TRAINING

Send **Someone** To Professional Training –
But Get Everyone
SOME BASIC LEVEL OF TRAINING!

MAKE SURE ALL VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF
KNOW YOUR SOPs ON PUBLIC INFO &
PUBLIC RELATIONS

ASSUME NOTHING IS PRIVATE – it will be on camera!





FEMA | Emergency Management Institute

Search...



- IS Home
- IS Course List
- Register for a FEMA SID
- Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience
- Curriculum
- Frequently Asked Questions

IS-29.A: Public Information Officer Awareness

Enter Keyword(s) or Course Code | Search IS

Course Date

8/5/2019

Course Overview

The Public Information Officer Awareness Course (IS0029) is designed to familiarize participants with the concepts underlying the PIO role. This course can provide a basic understanding of the PIO function for those new to the position. Additionally, it can provide those in executive level roles the necessary knowledge of PIO roles and responsibilities during an emergency.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Define emergency public information and the importance of being proactive. (Unit 1)
- Describe the role and functions of the PIO. (Unit 2)
- Describe the types of written products used in public information activities. (Unit 3)
- Recall preparation techniques that contribute to a successful media interview. (Unit 3)
- List the steps of the 8-Step Model for Strategic Communications. (Unit 4)
- Given a scenario, apply the 8-Step Model to a public awareness campaign. (Unit 4)
- Apply public information techniques to a 5% scenario. (Unit 5)

Primary Audience

This course is designed for new or less experienced state, local, tribal and territorial PIOs or those who have this role as a secondary function.

Prerequisites

The participant will benefit from participating in entry-level incident command system training prior to taking this course.

TAKE THIS COURSE

Interactive Web Based Course

TAKE FINAL EXAM

Please note that the IS Program now requires a FEMA SID to be used instead of your SSN. If you do not have a SID, register for one here.

Take Final Exam Online

NOTICES

Test questions are scrambled to protect test integrity

GO TO:

https://training.fema.gov/is/

MUST GET A STUDENT ID NUMBER (SID)

THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF FREE ONLINE COURSES ON THIS SITE.

IS-29.A

AWARENESS LEVEL PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE IS DIFFICULT

- MANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO LEARN and COVER
- VIDEOS / REELS are preferred – FRESH MATERIAL NEEDED but EDITS and REVIEW OF MEDIA takes TIME
- When done well (responding to ratings, comments, and interactions – can easily take up 2 - 4 hours per day)
- Trolls and Negative Comments require ATTENTION and COGENT RESPONSES. Get someone that likes doing it!
- **When done poorly** – it can cost you a lot more than that!

Vet kicked a horse, video and photos circulated on social media.
April 2025
Disappeared, posted a lengthy explanation on social media - found drowned 2 weeks later.





- **WHAT IS THE "FACE"** THAT PEOPLE SEE OF YOUR RESCUE? With all the AI content out there – do they *believe* that what you show, is really what is going on?

- DO you host an OPEN HOUSE or provide tours? Do you provide opportunities for others to "see inside" what your rescue is providing? Have you taken a LOOK at what other's THINK?

- HOW GOOD IS THE PERSON answering the other end of the phone line? WHAT FACE ARE THEY PUTTING ON YOU?

- **SOCIAL LICENSE requires CONSISTENCY, TELLING the TRUTH (even when it is HARD), and PROTECTING HORSE WELFARE.**

*This horse has been surrendered by the owner. We will share updates after this horse is vetted Tuesday. We plan to pull blood, do genetic testing, xrays, ultrasound etc. We are looking for a possible physical reason for the aggression. That does not mean we will or will not euthanize her. I've picked 5 people to assist in making that decision (Vet, behavior, etc). We are well aware these situations bring out deep feelings and while we expect emotional comments please respect the owner, the trainer, and CHRN. We absolutely realize the liability and that she is likely not going to be able to be placed in a traditional sense if at all. We are NOT interested in "rewilding", sanctuary or animal communicators. This horse is DANGEROUS. No amount of training or "fixing" medical issues can guarantee this won't happen again and that's a big consideration. There are horses all over the world with medical issues, in pain, that are spoiled or not "reprimanded" who do NOT try to kill people. This situation is exceedingly rare. Unabused, known history, known training, young, healthy, mare that reacts to being asked to back off with a vicious dog like attack. This isn't a stallion. Not an abused horse. Not a feral horse. We must consider human safety over a horse's life.

CURRENT CASE EXAMPLE: MACY – "DANGEROUS HORSE ATTACK" – VIDEO POSTED ONLINE July, 2026











Colorado Horse Rescue Network
6 days ago ·

On July 21st life as they knew it changed for a local horse trainer, a horse owner, and an 8 year old mare. Macy was born on the same place she still lived at with her mother. After concerning behavior trends and vet med professionals refusing to work with her the owner opted to seek outside help. That trainer was a local young woman that offers helping owners with ground manners, working young horses and minor behavior issues as a side job. Macy could be described as spoiled as a young horse but after a couple nips became some concerning bites it was clear she needed help. That fateful day was Macy's second session with the trainer. The first had gone well. This session would end differently. I have now seen the entire video of the session (I thought the trainer deleted it). At no point was the horse asked for anything unreasonable. There were concerning signs however. The final result of that session left the trainer with severe injuries that would require eventual surgery and permanent scars after what could have easily been a fatal attack. Let's be clear, nothing done in that session would have caused the attack in any normal horse. There was no fault, there were missed signs for months (likely years), and there were options for further vetting that should have been taken, but again nothing leading up to this indicated the horse was capable of this.

In August the owner finally decided to surrender Macy to CHRN. We had not spoken to the owner previously outside of letting the trainer know we would pay for her euthanasia since there were financial concerns, which she passed to the owner. Once the horse was brought to CHRN we put her under literal lock and key. Fortunately we are uniquely set up for (and very experienced with) handling feral stallions. We have the ability to move horses without entering their area through pressure and release techniques involving protected contact (like you would see in zoos). One thing we discovered almost instantly is this mare is extremely intelligent. In less than 15 minutes we taught her to sidepass to the stall bars to have a lead clipped to her halter so she would be restrained prior to entry for us to place her muzzle on. She was very engaging and personable. Immediately I had hundreds of questions. Her previous owner answered most. There were some with no answers. I lost sleep over the WHY of it all. I made no secret we've taken in horses involved in attacks and fatalities before. We have a pretty strict procedure and we needed to follow it. At no point would we have been wrong to euthanize. Still... we persisted. Thanks to a donation we covered her vet bills completely. Fast forw
genetic testing. This mare was the picture
hormone panel. The hormones that woul
charts, they were astronomical. Three to
range. Testosterone was the same as a br
the tumor. Finally. An answer.

Now a whole new set of questions. Could
Ovariectomies carry a very high success r
aggressive behavior in horses with Granu
greatly, owners report 90%+ are satisfied
$3,000-$4,500. That's a LOT of horses we
keep her alive knowing what she's capable of?

The question caused many sleepless nights. Experts weighed in. Board members weighed in. Behaviorists. Animal communicators. Everyone on the internet had an opinion. Almost everyone was sympathetic. A few were downright nasty. Many content creators used it as click bait giving their own spin (though since were sharing really incorrect info).
The decision was a large part financial. We could not commit to using money on one horse that could save many. Then the first "sign". We received an offer for her surgery to be covered completely. But we could not commit to this horse for life, when that space could help so many others. Then the second "sign". A very accomplished trainer reached out. After she recovered from surgery and tested in normal ranges they would evaluate thoroughly. Should they still have concerns we would opt for euthanasia. The red lights are slowly turning green. But what about the after? The liability? Another "sign". Three extremely solid situations came forward offering her working homes with experience and more importantly security. The horse would never leave unless she was returned. Yes it requires contracts, releases and some trust. No. Macy can never go to her original owner. Every trainer and the behaviorist agree that would be the most dangerous situation and highest chance of regression behaviorally. No she could never go up for adoption. She would remain here until her hormone levels are normal living in our feral horse holding area (meaning she lives with other horses and begins to learn how to "horse"). No one on one handling until hormones are normal and she's evaluated. Even then extreme caution and overthinking every choice.

Is it perfect? No.
Is it foolproof? No.
Could this still end in euthanasia? Yes.
Is this going to upset people? Yes.
And we are ok with that. This is THE most difficult decision I've ever made with the rescue. We set out to discover the why. Now we will take that next step. Or leap. I guarantee the second anything looks like aggression euthanasia won't even be a question and I won't lose a minute of sleep. But dammit we've got the backing and we're gonna try. I'm a cancer survivor and thinking a very
uld cost a horse their life is difficult to
ope everyone sees this post, reads ALL of it,
h fair and kind words. Funny, when a
hanize" due to our open door policy and
ly so much thought to each situation how
ls of quality of life and responsible rescue. I
oo.

a fundraiser called -The Macy Fund-. The

Now comes your part. Our ask for help.
We are starting a fundraiser called - **The Macy Fund**.
The fundraiser has three purposes;
1. To complete the goal of the go-fund-me established by the trainer.
2. To cover any additional expenses Macy may have that are not covered in the funds for surgery.
3. To offer assistance to three other mares (owners have contacted us about that are experiencing aggression from moderate to severe). Horses we want to try to help BEFORE something like this happens again. Funds to vet, evaluate, and test.
Those wanting to donate other ways are welcome.

SUSPECTED GRANULOSA CELL TUMOR (OVARY)

UCDAVIS VETERINARY MEDICINE

UC Davis Clinical Endocrinology Laborato
3230 VM3B 1089 Veterinary Medicine Drive
Davis, CA 95616
Phone: (530) 752-0298 Email: endolab@ucdavis.edu
Laboratory Reference Number: 260903565

King's Kreatures

OMITTED

ıail.com Secondary email:

Submitting Veterinarian: Alyssa King
Owner: CHRN
Animal Name: Macey **Animal/Reference #:**
Age: 8Y **Sex:** Female **Status:** Intact
Species: Equine **Breeding Date:**
Sample Collection Date: 09/01/26
Sample Received: 09/03/26

History:
Sudden aggression

Test(s) Requested:
GCT Panel 2

Test Name	Result
Testosterone	152.1 pg/ml

Testosterone level is **elevated** for a non-pregnant mare (laboratory reference range: 20-45 pg/ml).
If this mare is not pregnant, there is hormonal evidence for the presence of a granulosa cell tumor.

Test Name	Result
Equine Anti-Mullerian Hormone	>16 ng/ml

Anti-Mullerian hormone level is **elevated** for a cycling mare (normal laboratory reference range: 0.1-6.9 ng/ml).
There is hormonal evidence for the presence of a granulosa cell tumor.

Test Name	Result
Inhibin B	>804 pg/ml

Inhibin level is **elevated** for a cycling mare. **If this mare is not in estrus, there is hormonal evidence for the presence of a granulosa cell tumor.**

Laboratory reference ranges: normal 2-60pg/ml; approaching the upper limit of normal 60.1-100pg/ml; elevated >100pg/ml.

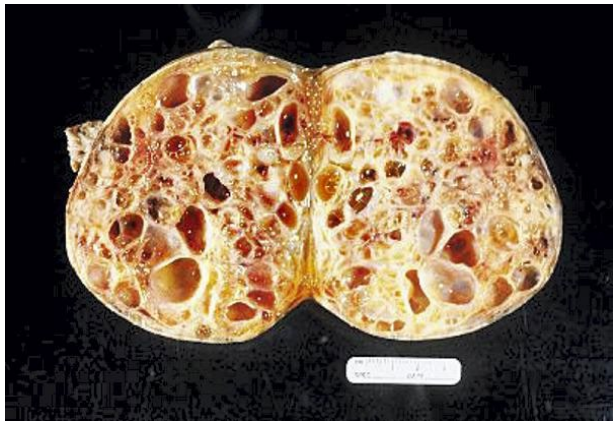
Colorado Horse Rescue Network
2 days ago ·

Macy is set for surgery October 20th. She will head to CSU on the 19th. Regardless of your feelings, please hope for an uneventful surgery that will allow this horse to be free of pain and mentally crippling hormones for the first time in a very long time. She will have laparoscopic surgery to remove both ovaries. Recovery is short and she should be ready to come back to the rescue Wednesday.

Many thanks to the private donor and to Fleet of Angels for making her surgery and care possible without taking away from our ability to help other horses in need.

Photo Credit Jeannie Haut See less





EXAMPLE OF TUMORS IN OTHER MARES

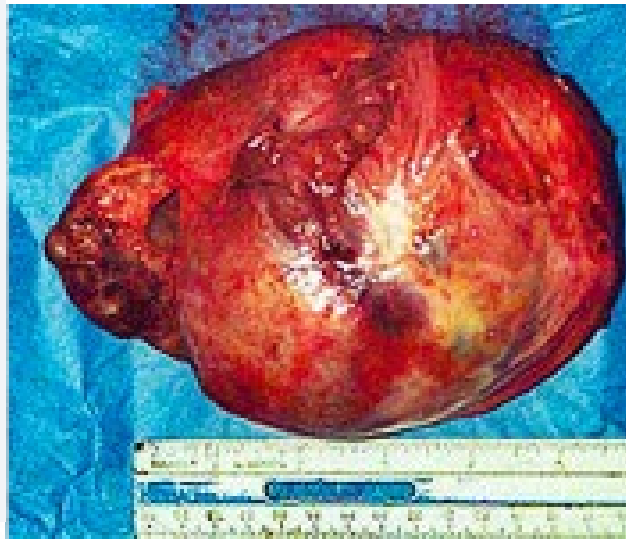


Photo Courtesy Jos Mottershead, Equine-Reproduction.com

Free Webinar Playlist
on YOUTUBE
TLAER related
Welfare related

Rebecca Husted, Ph.D.

Join 26k facebook Study Group

"Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue"

Email - delphiacres@hotmail.com

Cell – 214 679 3629