



For Immediate Release

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Fair Hill International Announces 4* Nomination by USEF

Fair Hill, Maryland – July 25, 2017 -- Fair Hill International (FHI) is pleased to announce that it has been recommended by the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) to host the second CCI4* (4*) in the United States. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) for a final decision in the fall.

The 4* is the pinnacle of the sport of eventing, also known as the equestrian triathlon. There are currently only six events of this level in the world.

“We are thrilled with the USEF’s announcement,” said Trish Gilbert, Co-President of Fair Hill International. “Our team has worked really hard to bring the 4* to Fair Hill. It is an honor to be selected to put on an event of this caliber – to showcase Maryland and the beautiful Fair Hill terrain on a world stage.” FHI’s Executive Director, Carla Geiersbach, agreed, “The teamwork that has made this selection possible is extraordinary. Our partners include multiple equestrian disciplines and also span the public and private sectors.”

"Fair Hill's nomination to host this 4* event in Maryland is a reflection of our rich equestrian tradition and establishes our state as a premier destination for equestrian events and equine activities," said Governor Larry Hogan. "We are proud that numerous private sector organizations, boards, and state and county agencies and elected officials all worked together to get Maryland to this point in the process, and we are extremely optimistic that we will secure final approval."

Cecil County Executive, Dr. Alan McCarthy, an equine vet prior to holding elected office, said, “I am excited that the United States Equestrian Federation recommended Fair Hill for the 4* event. I’d like to thank the regional team that put together Fair Hill’s bid to attract this wonderful opportunity to Cecil County, and I look forward to working with the team to ensure a successful outcome.”

The annual economic benefit of the 4* is projected to grow to up to \$30 million dollars annually. Once it is established, the event will welcome upwards of 80,000 spectators over four days. “Even with the addition of this event we know how important it is for Fair Hill and Cecil County to maintain their rural nature. We are proud that we can offer an event that will bring an economic benefit to the county by embracing and not erasing what makes this place so special,” continued Geiersbach.

“The USEF announcement is exciting news for Maryland’s pursuit of the CCI4*and our equestrian sports industry.” stated Terry Hasseltine, Executive Director, Maryland's Sports Commission. “This news paves the path necessary for our Fair Hill team and partners to move forward in delivering a world class venue and a world class event to achieve the economic threshold we believe this event can have on Maryland, Cecil County and the entire region.” added Hasseltine.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources manages the Fair Hill land. Fair Hill is a 5,613 acre Natural Resources Management Area. Bordered by Pennsylvania to the north and less than one half mile west of Delaware, Fair Hill is known for its pristine fields, woodlands and natural beauty. Once owned by William DuPont, Jr., the state bought it after his death with the mission of preserving the equestrian nature of the land Mr. DuPont loved.

“This is a wonderful day for Cecil County, the State of Maryland, the mid-Atlantic region and for the broader U.S. horse industry,” Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary Mark Belton said. “The Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area makes an excellent site for hosting this world-renowned equestrian event. Congratulations to all our partners and stakeholders on the recent announcement. We look forward to continuing our discussions about renovating and reinvigorating the property so it is primed and ready to host the 4*.”

The Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area is an historic landmark that has been a site for equestrian events in Maryland dating back to the 1930s. Several exciting annual events including steeplechase races, the Cecil County Fair and the Scottish Games call Fair Hill home. In addition, an elite racehorse training facility, the Fair Hill Training Center and offices for National Steeplechase Association and Thoroughbred Racing Associations are housed on the property.

Renovations coming to Fair Hill include an irrigated turf racecourse, new cross country course, rings and graded grass field on the infield, and a grandstand overlooking the turf track and rings. Maryland’s Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Stadium Authority and Fair Hill Foundation are working together in a public-private partnership to achieve these goals. Fair Hill Foundation represents several stakeholder groups at Fair Hill and is charged with raising the private dollars that will help secure these facility upgrades.

“The 4* recommendation is very welcome news as we move forward in helping to deliver world-class facility upgrades at Fair Hill. These renovations will benefit all the user groups here and showcasing the facility with a 4* event will be tremendous.” said Nina Gregory, Executive Director, Fair Hill Foundation. “We’d certainly like to take this opportunity to thank our private and state partners and supporters.”

According to the 2004 American Horse Council economic impact study, Maryland has more horses per square mile than any other state. The Maryland Horse Industry Board has been an active member of the 4* committee and has consistently worked to unify the horse industry across all disciplines.

"This announcement has awakened a sleeping giant, which is our \$1 billion-plus equine industry. It will make Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic region the center of the international horse world each fall and have a lasting impact on our industry for years to come. The Maryland Horse Industry Board has been working on a plan to develop what has evolved into a horse park system for over 15 years. We are thrilled that by hosting this prestigious event, it will give Fair Hill the opportunity to become a major world class equestrian field events destination while maintaining the pristine beauty of its natural environment,” noted Ross Peddicord, Executive Director, Maryland Horse Industry Board.

"On behalf of the agriculture community and all of us at the department, I applaud the recommendation of the United States Equestrian Federation to host a new international 4* equestrian event in Maryland. The equine industry is one the largest segments of Maryland agriculture and generates over \$1 billion annually in economic activity. Hosting this annual event will help our horse industry continue to thrive and help secure its future for generations to come,” said Joe Bartenfelder, Secretary, Department of Agriculture.