

NYRA Board Ratifies Bonomo as New Chairman

by [Press Release](#)

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“Horse racing is important to New York State’s economy and culture and I am proud of the work my colleagues and I have done over the past few years to improve the industry for the horses, jockeys, backstretch workers, owners, bettors and fans,” stated Chairman Bonomo. “I commend the fantastic job that Dr. Skorton did during his tenure. As a native New Yorker, business owner, and horse enthusiast, I am fully committed to expanding New York’s reputation as a global leader in thoroughbred racing. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Board to keep bringing positive changes at this important time.”

A graduate of St. John’s University and St. John’s University Law School, Mr. Bonomo has served as a Commissioner for the New York State Parks Bureau and the Long Island Power Authority. He is also a former Trustee of Hofstra University, and founded the GAELS Foundation, which is dedicated to the development of youth through sports.

During the meeting, the New York Racing Association’s executive management team provided an update on the organization’s 2014 financial performance. According to Chief Executive Officer and President Christopher Kay, on-track handle at Aqueduct Racetrack, Belmont Park and Saratoga Race Course rose 2 percent to more than \$374 million; the second-highest such total over the past six years. Combining a strong, sustainable business plan with “clean” independent financial audits from Big 4 Accounting Firm KPMG, Kay noted that 2014 was a landmark year, with the New York Racing Association securing its first operating surplus in more than a decade.

The team also discussed this year’s inaugural Belmont Stakes Racing Festival, a three-day event featuring 17 graded stakes races and more than \$10 million in purses. The festival is highlighted by the 147th running of the Belmont Stakes on June 6; the oldest and longest leg of thoroughbred racing’s Triple Crown.

“As a result of last year’s success and this year’s enhanced racing cards and entertainment features, we are ahead of last year’s sales figures at this date,” stated Kay. “As of today, we have already sold out of half of our ticket inventory in the grandstand, clubhouse and dining areas combined. I encourage all our fans to buy their tickets as soon as possible.”

Kay detailed the numerous guest-centric enhancements made for the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival designed to further enhance the guest experience. In addition to scheduling a special post-race concert featuring a top-tier band, and extensive operational changes and enhancements made by Belmont’s hospitality vendor Centerplate, he noted that:

- Cellular capacity will be tripled across the Belmont property, with wireless providers Verizon and AT&T adding three new towers.
- Wi-Fi capacity across the Belmont property will increase by 75 percent, with additional access points offering added convenience for customers using tablets and smartphones.
- Mutuel bays also will also be added to the Backyard, providing additional wagering access for Belmont guests.
- Entry turnstiles will be removed at Belmont, with a new ticketing system providing for the electronic scanning of all entry tickets. This will provide greater convenience, while improving pedestrian flow.
- Two new food truck festival areas in the Backyard and near the Top of the Stretch will feature more than 30 of the most popular New York-area trucks.

Finally, Kay reported that the New York Racing Association continues to work closely with the Long Island Railroad, with the two partners collectively investing \$5 million to fully refurbish the transit rotunda on the west end of the Grandstand, as well as constructing new rail station platforms. The project, which will be completed prior to Belmont Stakes Day, will ultimately increase Belmont Station train capacity from eight to 10 cars and result in improved public transportation access for racing fans throughout the metropolitan area.

The next meeting of the Reorganization Board of Directors is scheduled for June 24, in New York City.