

March 8, 2008

Fair Grounds Shatters Records on Louisiana Derby Day

A record all-sources handle and modern-era records in on-track attendance and handle were all set on Louisiana Derby Day Saturday at Fair Grounds.

The all-sources handle of \$12,962,024 on the 12-race card topped the record of \$12,400,747 set last year on an 11-race Louisiana Derby Day card, producing a 4.5 percent increase in the process.

A crowd of 9,971 – the largest in the 11-year history of Fair Grounds' grandstand-clubhouse facility – wagered \$1,027,467, the first \$1 million on-track handle at Fair Grounds in the simulcast era.

Saturday's numbers represented 57.7 percent increase in attendance and 13.9 percent in handle on-track over 2007, when 6,321 fans wagered \$901,941.

"This was a remarkable afternoon," said Fair Grounds president Randy Soth. "We owe a debt of gratitude to our horsemen, our racing office and our patrons both on-track and around the country for making today a historic one."

On the track, Winchell Thoroughbreds' Pyro captured the 95th running of the \$600,000 Grade II Louisiana Derby, the richest Kentucky Derby prep to date this season. Pyro was ridden by Shaun Bridgmohan and is trained by Steve Asmussen.

Three other Grade II stakes were part of Saturday's supporting card. Brereton Jones' Proud Spell captured the \$400,000 Fair Grounds Oaks for 3-year-old fillies, Michael and Doreen Tabor's Circular Quay took the \$500,000 New Orleans Handicap for his first victory since last year's Louisiana Derby, and Gary Tanaka's Proudinsky won the \$500,000 Mervin H. Muniz Jr. Memorial Handicap on the turf.

Fair Grounds Race Course & Slots, the nation's third-oldest Thoroughbred racing facility, has been in operation since 1872. Located in New Orleans, Fair Grounds is owned by Churchill Downs Incorporated (NASDAQ Global Select Market: CHDN); it also operates a slot-machine gaming facility and nine off-track betting parlors throughout southeast Louisiana. Fair Grounds' 136th season of racing runs through March 23, 2008. Information about Fair Grounds can be found on the Internet at www.fairgroundsracecourse.com.