

# **NEW MEXICO RACING COMMISSION AWARDED at 2018 ARCI ANNUAL CONFERENCE on RACING INTEGRITY and EQUINE WELFARE**

Sitting amongst their peers in Hot Springs, AR on April 5, 2018, New Mexico Racing Commission (NMRC) Chairman Ray Willis and Executive Director of the NMRC Ismael "Izzy" Trejo were presented awards by ARCI President, Ed Martin, on behalf of the New Mexico Racing Commission for the "exemplary service to the cause of racing integrity".

The awards stem from the prolific efforts that New Mexico Racing Commissioners themselves as well as NMRC staff have put forth in increasing the level of integrity of New Mexico's horse racing industry.

Over the last two years, the NMRC has been asked to speak at several national industry conferences to provide details on how they are leveling the playing field in their home state. When New Mexico speaks, people are starting to listen due to the results of significant rule changes and testing efforts implemented over the last two years. The state has taken a tough stance on trainers and owners that violate the state's new drug violation rules. Several heavy handed sanctions have been levied to those violators. But the most noticeable difference is the decrease in drug positives from 2016 to 2017.

The NMRC feels that the decrease in drug positives is partially derived from the increased number of out of competition tests. New Mexico ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the number of out of competition tests conducted in 2016 and is in the upper echelons if not the most in 2017. A new variable in the out of competition testing program is hair testing, which was implemented in July of 2017. Since the inception of hair testing, several horses have been kept from running in large money races, including the 2017 All-American Futurity, due to clenbuterol findings in the hair. The NMRC feels that hair testing is a tool that can be used to catch horses that have been administered clenbuterol in other jurisdictions and then come to New Mexico in an attempt to capture the lucrative purse money available. The NMRC extends a big invite to horsemen from other jurisdictions to come race with us, but rest assured a high level of integrity is going to be expected of them as is of our own horsemen.

For all the years that the national racing industry has looked down on New Mexico's horse racing industry, let it be clear that is no longer. Under the leadership of Chairman Ray Willis, Vice-Chair Gayla McCulloch, and Commissioners Dr. Leonard Blach, Ken Corazza and Dr. Jerry Cospers, there is no doubt that other racing jurisdictions throughout the country will continue to look up and acknowledge what the New Mexico Racing Commission is doing to increase integrity in the horse racing industry.