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Fair Grounds Race Course to Offer Record Daily Overnight Purses During 2008-09 Racing Meet

by Lenny Vangilder

Fair Grounds Race Course & Slots has announced purses for its 137th season of Thoroughbred racing, which begins on Nov. 14, 2008.

Daily overnight purses offered at the New Orleans track will average approximately \$300,000, which is a 20 percent increase over the \$249,000 per day average paid in 2007-08. In addition, a stakes schedule worth \$6.6 million will be offered during the meet, which runs through March 29, 2009.

"We're delighted to announce this revised purse structure for Fair Grounds Race Course, which provides increased opportunity for our horsemen and a solid foundation upon which to conduct our upcoming meet," said Donald R. Richardson, senior vice president of racing for Churchill Downs Incorporated. "This agreement is an important step in our efforts to elevate Fair Grounds to the top of the nation's winter racing options. We are looking forward to another great season at Fair Grounds."

Stall applications for 2008-09 must be postmarked by Monday and are available at racing offices across the country and online at www.fairgroundsracecourse.com. The stakes schedule for Fair Grounds' 2008-09 meet will be released shortly.

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' 137th Thoroughbred season will run from Nov. 14, 2008, through March 29, 2009, and its inaugural Quarter Horse meet was conducted from Aug. 20-24, 2008. Information about Fair Grounds can be found on the Internet at www.fairgroundsracecourse.com.