

2019 League March Newsletter



Welcome to the March issue of The League News. We kicked off the year with an exciting trip to Tulsa, Oklahoma for the 2019 Winter League Footing Academy (Jan. 18-19) and the 2019 League Symposium (Jan. 20-23).

Thank you to all our wonderful sponsors for their support, and to Expo Square and the Hilton Double Tree - Warren Place for hosting us.

We had a great time getting to know each other better, networking, and learning about various topics through expert panels and roundtable discussions. Congratulations to our Footing Academy Graduates, CMEC Graduates, and new League Board Members! A special thank you to Travis Emore and Bill Allen for their many years on service on the board.

Now is the time to mark your calendars for next year and plan to join us in Asheville, North Carolina for the 2020 League Footing Academy (Jan. 17-18) at WNC Agricultural Center and the 2020 League Symposium (Jan. 19-22).

We hope you enjoy reading the bi-monthly League e-Newsletter. Stay tuned for important updates, fun board member profiles, and informational reviews throughout the year. Read on for a feature article about the South Point Arena and Equestrian Center, a profile on new board member Lynne Dickinson, a highlight on our sponsor Queen Horse Bedding, a review from the 2019 Footing Academy, and much more!

2019 Facility of the Year: South Point Arena and Equestrian Center

An Interview with Steve Stallworth

<South Point Video>

The South Point Arena and Equestrian Center in Las Vegas, Nevada opened its doors in 2006 and in 2019 earned the title of Facility of the Year from The League. “We are so excited about receiving this award,” said General Manager Steve Stallworth. “We applied for the award last year as well and it felt great to finally be recognized by an organization such as The League. In the last few years, we have really hit our stride and have been able to fulfill the vision of our owners, Paula and Michael Gaughan. We have a great staff and support from the top down. Our motto here is ‘Find a Way to Say Yes’ and our philosophy is to do everything we can to help event organizers have successful events.”

The South Point also makes it effortless for exhibitors to simultaneously compete while enjoying a luxury vacation. “There’s no other facility quite like ours,” Steve explained. “We are part of a wonderful hotel and casino with 11 restaurants, movie theatres, and a spa. We have three indoor climate-controlled arenas as well as about 1,200 permanent stalls. Trailers can pull right in and you can check into your hotel room from the barn! Once you arrive at the facility, you never have to go outside again.”

Steve, who has been in the venue management business for three decades, truly appreciates the agricultural knowledge and networking opportunities he has had through The League. “I previously worked at the Orleans Arena and was part of the International Association of Venue Managers,” Steve said. “Being a part of The League is so valuable because if you have a question, you can reach out and call someone who manages another equestrian facility. The symposiums are great too because of the well-roundedness of the topics that are discussed.”

“Receiving this award was such a nice culmination of all of our hard work,” he added. “Thank you so much to The League, our owners, and our team here at The South Point.” To learn more about The South Point Arena and Equestrian Center, click [here](#) to visit their website.

<photo of South Point>

Welcome New Members

We are happy to welcome the following new member to The League. We hope you take full advantage of all your membership has to offer:

- Katherine Holman, Ortega Equestrian Center, San Juan Capistrano, CA
- Greg Whitfield, Harrison County Fairgrounds, Gulfport, MS,
- Dana Ferris, National Equestrian Center, Lake St. Louis, MO

New Board Member Profile: Lynne Dickinson

<picture of Lynne>

The third time was a charm for Lynne Dickinson of Dripping Springs Ranch Park & Event Center in Dripping Springs Texas. “I’ve run for the board several times and I was really excited to finally get elected,” Lynne shared. “I was referred to The League by Cami Pearson when we were getting ready to open our facility. Being a League member has been great and I have learned more about analyzing revenue streams and networking. It’s really valuable to have people who I can reach out and talk to in different situations.”

Lynne has benefitted significantly from being involved with The League and wanted to get involved in the governance of the organization. “I have gained so much knowledge and wanted to be able to give back in some kind of capacity,” she said. “I am on several committees: the Education Committee, Nominating Committee, and Membership Committee. I want to explore new ideas for attracting members. I wish more people knew about The League and how useful it is to be a member!”

Congratulations 2019 CEMC Graduates

<picture of CEMC Graduates>

The League of Agricultural and Equine Centers, in association with Middle Tennessee State University, worked to develop the Certified Manager of Equine Centers program. The CEMC program aims to provide an incentive for professional improvement in equine center management, recognize those who achieve the specific standards, and develop professional status in the field of equine center management

We are proud to introduce the following 2019 CEMC graduates (pictured above left to right):

- Lynne Dickinson from Dripping Springs Ranch Park & Event Center in Dripping Springs Texas

- Bert Rodriguez and Chris Phost from the Southwestern Fair Commission in Tucson, Arizona
- Matt Buchanan from WNC Agricultural Center in Fletcher, North Carolina

Winter 2019 League Footing Academy

A Review from Debra Adams

Debra Adams, Fairgrounds Manager of the Garfield County Fairgrounds, was very pleased with her experience of attending the Winter Footing Academy in Tulsa, OK.

"I was delighted with the content of the Footing Academy in Tulsa," Debra commented. "I learned far more than I imagined and now have a much better awareness of how a facility that serves Rodeo and Equestrian events must possess a knowledge of footing and its maintenance. What we learned will help us raise the bar in providing quality facilities and events. Thank you for offering this course!"

Upcoming League Footing Academy and Symposium Dates

Summer 2019 League Footing Academy

- May 21-22, 2019
- Dripping Springs Ranch Park & Event Center

Winter 2020 League Footing Academy

- Jan 17-18, 2020
- WNC Agricultural Center

The 2019 League Symposium

- Jan 19-22, 2020
- Asheville, North Carolina

Upcoming Forum Dates

- **April 3, 2019:** Board and Community Involvement
- **June 5, 2019:** Facility Safety

The League Forum is a bi-monthly round table teleconference sponsored by The League. Every other month a topic will be announced. Interested participants are asked to sign up through The League office: info@laec.info or 859-887-0033. A dial-in number and passcode will be sent the day prior to the call. It is not a toll-free call. Long distance charges will accrue depending on your

telephone calling plan. Each call will be moderated by a board member or CMEC graduate. Experts may be included on the call to give their knowledge of the specific topic. Be sure to mark your calendars and contact The League office if you wish to be on a call.

<button: Click here for a full list of upcoming events>

2019 Symposium Review

Stay tuned throughout the year for useful re-caps and takeaways from our 2019 League Symposium. Read on to learn more about Professional Development as taught by Amanda Blair of Expo Square.

Professional Development by Amanda Blair, CEO of Expo Square and Tulsa State Fair

<picture of Amanda teaching>

Amanda Blair kicked off the League Symposium by leading the first session on professional development. Amanda challenged the group to raise their hand as high as they could and then told everyone to reach higher. “This is what we expect from our staff,” she said. Amanda offered numerous tips for fostering a collaborative team:

- Remember the acronym “Link”:
 - Listen to your customers.
 - Inspire memories.
 - Never say no.
 - Know your stuff.
- Plan monthly activities that involve staff and their family members.
- Sometimes a meaningful gift can help touch hearts such as giving staff members a gift card to a grocery store for Thanksgiving.
- Plan to host lunches and staff training. Don’t exclude people and make sure your training goes full circle.
- Respect each other and stay positive.
- Find the right *people* you can teach skills to rather than hiring people for their skills.

If you have any questions for Amanda, she can be reached at ablair@exposquare.com.

Sponsor Highlight: Queen Horse Bedding

An Interview with Avery Harper

Queen Horse Bedding has been a member of The League for the past seven years and prides itself on creating clean and absorbent bedding.

“Our bedding is more absorbent because we take extra time to find the right materials and screening process,” explained Plant Manager Avery Harper. “Our product is clean because we get it directly from sawmills and use a kiln drying process. Our easy sift shavings also create less waste.”

“Now we’re in the process of opening a new plant in Texas,” he explained. “We are expanding and looking forward to servicing a lot more people. Being part of the League is great because we can interact with the leaders of event facilities and understand trends in the equine industry.”

As a sponsor of The League, Queen Horse Bedding enjoys learning about the needs of various facilities. “It is nice to see facilities and understand their goals and needs,” Avery added. “Even beyond that, we are able to connect with both existing and potential customers through The League. In addition, our involvement with The League gives us ideas on how to improve our own products.” To learn more about Queen Horse Bedding and its products, click [here](#).

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