



Jumping Into the Future at Balmoral Park

Balmoral Park, the former harness racing track located in Crete IL., held its Grand Re-Opening on Saturday June 10, ending the anticipation of this facility's renovation. This state-of-the-art show jumper/hunter complex is a must see in the region. "This attraction will leave everyone amazed at the new gem added to the crown of the Chicago Southland," stated Jim Garrett, President / CEO for the Chicago Southland CVB.

Laying out the history at the event was Crete Mayor Michael Einhorn who claimed to have been "seriously bummed out" when during the Christmas Holiday of 2015 Balmoral Park hosted its final races. He also went on to explain that he thought "the park was doomed, and that he said a lot of prayers." It was a 200-acre park in unincorporated Will County with a niche quality that required the right buyer. "What do you do with the place?" Einhorn said. Along came Tom Struzzi, founder and CEO of HITS, which stands for Horse Shows in the Sun. Tom stumbled upon Balmoral Park in hopes of purchasing equipment and ended up purchasing the property, all within a 24-hour period. A year later they both stood together cutting a ribbon announcing the Grand Re-Opening of this historic facility.

The public is invited to roam the grounds, now that the park is filled with horses once again. You may sit in the grandstand and look on as riders put horses through the obstacles of each competition ring. There is a restaurant and full bar all with large windows overlooking the spectacular performance rings. Jumping riders sail over the obstacles called fences with crossbars in hopes of not knocking the bars off, which means to "go clean" – explained John Eickman Vice President of HITS. To do this in the fastest time is the overall goal of the event for the jumping riders. Hunter riders jump at different levels and are judged more on the style of the rides, not speed. Spectators are welcome to take children out to the stables to view the horses and the culture of this lifestyle.

Competitions will run through September and are free of charge except on Saturday. Saturday's adults will incur a \$5 donation to local nonprofit groups, who help with assisting the spectators. You can find out more details about HITS on their website www.hitsshows.com as well as the schedule for the upcoming summer months. The Balmoral Park site is located at 26435 S. Dixie Hwy. in Crete, IL. Those using IL-394 will see the large wooden Balmoral Park sign and will turn onto Elms Court Lane, and then make a right turn onto Route 1 (Dixie Hwy). Look for the Gate 3 parking lot, where there is a (spectator entrance) and enter the building through a covered main entrance at the South end of the facility.

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