

## HITS-ON-THE-HUDSON PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF ROLEX/USEF NATIONAL SHOW JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIP

**SAUGERTIES, NY ( May 18, 2005)** Tom Struzzi, Owner and President of HITS, and his staff hosted a press conference on May 16 at the HITS-on-the-Hudson show grounds in Saugerties, New York. Members of the press received details of the **\$150,000 Rolex/USEF National Show Jumping Championship**, followed by a tour of the new HITS High-Performance Horse Complex. Mr. Struzzi was joined by: Maurice Hinchey, US Congressman for the 22nd District of New York; David Cornstein, Chairman of the New York State Olympic Games Commission; Allen Brill, President and CEO of Rolex Watch USA, Inc.; James Wolf, Executive Director, High Performance, US Equestrian Federation; Chris Kappler, Team Silver Medalist & Individual Bronze Medalist, 2004 Olympic Games; and Michael Berg, Executive Director, Family of Woodstock.

Among the group of approximately 50 attendees were members of prominent equestrian publications, local newspapers, as well as a number of arts / entertainment magazines. WKZE, WKNY radio stations and Time Warner Cable Six News covered the event.

Mr. Struzzi described some recent improvements to the HITS-on-the-Hudson facility in his opening remarks to the press. We have added seven new barns to replace the tent stabling used last year, bringing our total permanent stalls up to 1,200. We have also added 50 RV sites for a total of 100. A new ring has been added, allowing us to have competition in 10 rings simultaneously, making us a pretty unique facility. Most importantly for the Championship, we have built a High-Performance Horse Complex with 80 permanent stalls, its own schooling and lunging areas, all fenced in and secure. In order to meet the standards of International competition the area needs to be secure with access by credentials only. The complex is a big plus for this site, not only for this event but for future events that we hope to attract, perhaps some Olympic qualifiers in the future. This year's Rolex/USEF Championship is a three-legged competition taking place on Wednesday, Friday, and then the final leg on Sunday. Sunday's competition is the one that we hope to get a big crowd for, and we hope the entire County of Ulster will come out to see it. The equestrian world will be watching the event that weekend, and television (HDTV) will film it, which we are very excited about.

Mr. Struzzi passed the microphone to Maurice Hinchey, US Congressman for the 22nd District of New York. A strong supporter of the HITS-on-the-Hudson project from its early beginnings, Congressman Hinchey offered his congratulations on a great inaugural year and continued success for the future. People are just very thrilled at having this operation here, with the great excitement and all of the exhibition that goes with it. This is a very important day, Rolex is a magical name with a lot of prestige, and to have it associated with this upcoming event in June, I think it is quite marvelous.

David Cornstein, Chairman of the New York State Olympic Games Commission was the next to address the press. He expressed his pleasure at being present to represent Governor Pataki. We're getting very close, as you might know, to finding out which city will have the honor of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. And I think that this would be a wonderful gain not only for New York City, New York State, and our country, but it would also be a marvelous endeavor for this sport as a whole, because the public are not as familiar with the equestrian events that are a vital part of this as they are of other sports.

Allen Brill, President and CEO of Rolex Watch USA, Inc. took his turn at the microphone, and received a round of applause when he opened with "You know this is Saugerties, Ulster County, but wherever there are equestrian events I think it's always Rolex country." He expressed his delight to be on the stage with so many good friends from the United States Equestrian Federation, and his honor to share the stage with Olympic Medalist Chris Kappler. This year Rolex is celebrating our 25th anniversary with the USEF and we have sponsored the National Show Jumping Championship since 1997. We go back a long way, and we join all in New York State to welcoming the 2005 Championship to Saugerties at this outstanding facility.

Representing the United States Equestrian Federation was James Wolf, Executive Director, High Performance. The USEF is thrilled to bring the National Championship to this terrific facility, and we are confident that this will be one of the premier events that we will have this year. Full credit and lots of kudos to Tom and his group for creating such an outstanding facility here in Saugerties, New York. They [HITS] bring a high-level of professionalism to organizing championships and competitions such as this, and they have had a significant economic impact on the local community and the state of New York, which I know the community is grateful for, and so are we. The state of New York has a rich heritage in equestrian sport, they have a very strong bid to host the Olympic Games [2012], certainly if that happens this site will play a significant role in those games. Rolex Watch USA has been an outstanding supporter of equestrian sport and over our 25-year partnership they have constantly challenged us to raise the bar and to produce competitions that are at a level of excellence that Rolex wants to be associated with. We have had a tremendously successful run in International competition, culminating in the last Olympic games where the US was the only country to medal in every discipline [equestrian], and every one of our athletes brought a medal home. We couldn't do that without our partners, our horse show organizers like Tom, our sponsors and state governments like the state of New York.

Chris Kappler, Team Silver Medalist & Individual Bronze Medalist, 2004 Olympic Games was welcomed to the podium with huge applause. First of all I would really like to thank Rolex Watch USA. It is so important for the sponsors in our country to get more and more behind equestrian sports. It is a fantastic sport and the only one in the world where men and women compete equally. Secondly I would like to thank Tom, this is a marvelous facility that he has built and he is catering to every level. I can bring a whole stable of horses here, my young riders, young horses, being able to develop them all the way up through grand prix and

International level. The fact that now he has gone on to have a major International event is so, so, important for our country because we don't have many championships like this in America, and it is extremely important to keep the sport here in America, to keep developing the level within our country. Here everyone is going to be able to see this from the grass roots all the way up to International level competition. So I would really like to thank everyone for their participation/involvement, and I am looking forward to competing myself in the competition.

Family of Woodstock, a not-for-profit organization providing crisis intervention services throughout Ulster County, is the sole beneficiary of the gate admissions during the seven weeks of the HITS-on-the-Hudson circuit. Michael Berg, Executive Director of Family of Woodstock was invited to speak. First I want to say what a tremendous boon this has been to Family of Woodstock. Our year was really helped, and in some respects saved by the \$31,000 we made at the gate last year as a result of Tom Struzzi, and I can't say how important it is. Times are difficult in the human services, now with government having to spend money on other things I feel that cutbacks are ominous. As an Agency Director, I feel like my task is to figure out how to move, at least to some extent, to other sources of income, and so I spend some time trying to figure out how I can ride Tom's coat-tails. [Laughter] No, I mean that, absolutely, we use his facility for storage when people donate stuff, we used it on Saturday night to host a poker tournament, and we'll be taking money at the gate. We're very lucky and also the county is very lucky that this marriage has occurred, and I would suggest to the leadership in this community that we should be figuring out ways that we can work with Tom Struzzi to facilitate his work, and benefit our community for the tremendous resource that HITS has become, and will be even more this summer.

After the speeches, the press boarded the Kingston Trolley for a guided tour of the facility given by Tom Struzzi. Chris Kappler joined the tour, and was delighted with the improvements at the facility. Kappler was especially impressed by the **Euro felt footing** installed in the International Compound and in the Grand Prix Arena. The tour ended with a ribbon cutting ceremony at the entrance to the High-Performance Horse Complex.



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for new HITS High-Performance Horse Complex Left to right: Allen Brill, President & CEO of Rolex Watch USA, Inc., Tom Struzzi, President and Owner HITS, Olympic Medalist Chris Kappler, David Cornstein, Chairman of New York State Olympic Games Commission  
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