

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FARRIER SCHOOLS JOIN FORCES TO CLARIFY, PROMOTE
EDUCATION STANDARDS OFFERED TO US STUDENTS;
NEW ASSOCIATION FORMED**

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA—The American Farriers Education Council, a new affiliation of farrier educators and farrier schools, was formed on August 19, 2005 at a meeting held in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The new association's purpose will be to support and promote the efforts of member farrier schools in providing superior education for students who wish to learn trimming and shoeing skills. At stake are the future usefulness, longevity, and athleticism of the nation's 9.2 million horses and the enjoyment and employment of many millions of Americans who depend on sound, safe horses for recreation, competition, and work.

The American Farriers Education Council (AFEC) will operate as a sovereign body, separate from any other farrier organization.

About 25 people representing 16 U.S. farrier schools attended the meeting at the request of Oklahoma State Horseshoeing School owner Reggie Kester. Recent negative publicity about the quality of farrier education in the United States motivated school instructors and owners to show their solidarity and to defend their excellent record in satisfying the nation's continual need for new farriers to service horses of all breeds and sports.

Currently, an estimated 40 different programs are offered to prospective farrier students at public and private schools in the U.S. Choices range from independent distance learning to "you can shoe your own horse" courses to in-depth programs designed

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to prepare a student for entry into a career in horseshoeing. About 25 brick-and-mortar private farrier schools educate the majority of candidates with career aspirations. Private schools outnumber state-subsidized programs by a 2:1 margin.

At its founding, AFEC represented two-thirds of the private schools. "Private vocational schools can provide as good or better education when compared to a publicly-funded school for several reasons," commented veteran farrier educator Dr. Doug Butler, who taught farrier science at universities for over 30 years. "Private school students generally shoe more horses, and the programs are more focused on results. Private schools are quick to respond to special needs or interests of students and can offer motivated students opportunities that are invaluable to their future careers."

"Private farrier school educators are dedicated to quality instruction of students and the care of customers' horses," AFEC stated in its meeting summary, "The majority of leading farriers in the United States, including most certified farriers, are graduates of our schools."

One of the first official acts of the new organization was to agree on basic standards already shared by the schools, regardless of the length of the course of instruction. Schools then voted to follow a basic curriculum, based on the widely used textbook, *Principles of Horseshoeing III (P3)*.

The book's authors, Doug Butler PhD FWCF and Jacob Butler agreed to develop written and practical examinations based on the text, to ensure the measured progress of students and to gauge understanding of trimming, shoeing and forge work modules. AFEC member schools will voluntarily administer these tests.

In addition, member schools agreed to host continuing education programs designed to attract alumni once each calendar year. Past graduates will be encouraged to update their skills and certification levels at these special seminars.

AFEC's initial officers will be President Reggie Kester (Oklahoma State Horseshoeing School); Vice President and Spokesperson Bob Smith (Pacific Coast Horseshoeing School); and Secretary/Treasurer Susie Goode (Tucson School of Horseshoeing).

To learn more about the American Farriers Education Council, please contact Bob Smith, Vice-President and Spokesperson, American Farriers Education Council, c/o Pacific Coast Horseshoeing School, 9675 Florin Rd., Sacramento CA 95829-1009; Tel 916 366 6064; Fax 916 366 6618; Email pchs@farrierschool.com

NOTE TO EDITORS: One of AFEC's first objectives will be to counter a recent rash of negative publicity about farrier education standards in the United States. Vice President Bob Smith will be available for comment, interviews, and clarification of how most farriers are educated. If you are planning an article about farrier education, farrier licensing/regulation, or farrier certification, please contact AFEC for information about what farriers are taught, who teaches them, and what the advantages of a private, independent education system are to the U.S. horse industry and horse owners.

IMAGES AVAILABLE: High-resolution image files of activities at farrier schools in the United States are available to editors on request.

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