



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 727

Representing nearly 10,000
hardworking men and women
throughout the Chicagoland area

John T. Coli
Secretary-Treasurer

John T. Coli Jr.
President

APRIL 5, 2016 | MEMBER NEWS

UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER PRESENTS UNIQUE CHALLENGES FOR HAWTHORNE RACECOURSE MEMBERS

Live Horse Racing at Stickney Track Continues Through April 30

While Chicago's bizarre spring weather has had people scratching their heads, the Teamsters Local 727 members who work at Hawthorne Racecourse aren't in the least bit surprised.

"One minute it can be 70 degrees and sunny, then the next it's 30 degrees and snowing," union steward and starter Bill "Okie" Fultz said with a shrug. "The weather during Hawthorne's racing meets can change so quickly, so we have to be ready for anything."

More than 40 Local 727-represented parkers, starters, jockey valets and program sellers work at Hawthorne during the Stickney, Ill., track's fall thoroughbred racing meet October through December and the shorter spring thoroughbred meet March through April.

Hawthorne's structural makeup is specially suited for cold-weather racing, with a mostly indoor grandstand, a covered paddock and underground valet parking facilities.

Decades ago, there was even a tunnel connecting Hawthorne with the former Sportsman's Park across the street and a tunnel for horses leading from the paddock to the south side of Hawthorne's track.

Local 727 members also work at Arlington Park during its summer thoroughbred meet, which runs from May through September. Fultz said even though, on paper, their job duties are identical at both tracks, their work at Hawthorne presents unique challenges.

"The horses have run all season, so by the time the winter meet starts, they're tired and stiff and can be much harder to handle," Fultz said. "Then you have the snow and ice and wind to deal with at the starting gate, not to mention the muddy and sloppy track conditions. All those things make our jobs even trickier and more dangerous, so we have to use extra precautions."

Hawthorne Racecourse opened in 1891 and has twice been destroyed by fires, but it keeps moving forward with improvements – most recently, the addition of a "players' lounge" and



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VIP indoor viewing boxes.

“Hawthorne has been an integral part of the racing industry’s history, and with the help of our hardworking members, it will be an integral part of the racing industry’s future in Illinois,” said John T. Coli, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 727.

Live thoroughbred racing at Hawthorne Racecourse will continue on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through April 30.

Teamsters Local 727 represents nearly 10,000 hardworking men and women throughout the Greater Chicago area.