

From: [Robin Brigode](#)
To: [COB_mail](#)
Subject: FW: Racing at Rillito Park
Date: Tuesday, December 27, 2016 12:57:09 PM
Attachments: [The Importance of Rillito Park.docx](#)
[ATT00001.htm](#)

From: Alexa Kari Ravit <[REDACTED]>
Date: December 27, 2016 at 8:06:06 AM MST
To: undisclosed-recipients;;
Subject: **Racing at Rillito Park**

Hello,

My name is Alexa Ravit, and I am a graduate student in the University of Arizona's Race Track Industry Program. It has come to my attention that Rillito Park may not hold its winter race meet in 2017 if it fails to secure a five year extension to allow the track to hold races through 2021.

I have attached letters from several students in the Race Track Industry Program who would like to express the impact that Rillito Park has on them as future leaders in the horse racing industry. I have also attached links to two articles written by me about Rillito Park on the America's Best Racing website, a marketing platform for horse racing in North America. I have also listed a link to an article from Trainer Magazine that details the importance of the students to Rillito Park and vice versa.

America's Best Racing:

RTIP and Rillito Park: Partnering for Racing's Future
<https://www.americasbestracing.net/lifestyle/2016-rtip-and-rillito-park-partnering-racings-future>

Rillito Park Runs with Help of RTIP Students
<https://www.americasbestracing.net/lifestyle/2016-rillito-park-runs-help-rtip-students>

Trainer Magazine:
The Students who helped Saved the Racetrack
<http://trainermagazine.com/articles/rillito-park-racetrack-the-students-who-helped-save-the-track/2016/7/25>

Considering how significant Rillito is to the horse racing industry, Tucson, and the students in the Race Track Industry Program, I am confident that the correct decision will be made, which is to allow the track to continue hosting horse races for at least five more years. Thank you for your time, and happy holidays.

Sincerely,
Alexa Ravit
Race Track Industry Program
[REDACTED]

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Alexa Ravit, and I am a graduate student in the Race Track Industry Program (RTIP) at the University of Arizona. I was fortunate to have worked at Rillito Park during its winter meet in 2016 as the director of social media, so I have witnessed firsthand the impact that this racetrack has on the RTIP students and the entire Tucson community. I am writing to implore you to grant Rillito a five-year extension to host horse races so that it can be renovated and made to be an even better racing venue for the community.

Rillito offers students in the RTIP the opportunity to get real-world experience in the horse racing industry. If you are not familiar with the RTIP, this program has produced countless top trainers and officials in the racing industry. The most famous graduate of them all is Bob Baffert, the trainer of racing's 12th Triple Crown winner, American Pharoah. To prevent racing at Rillito is to eliminate the opportunity for the next potential Bob Baffert to gain applicable skills and knowledge to use in his or her future racing career. The Race Track Industry Program may target a niche demographic, but it molds leaders of the racing industry who are known in the United States and around the world.

As the director of social media for Rillito, I was exposed to every facet of track operations and the students' roles in these operations. My colleagues were involved in everything from taking entries for the races to operating the photo finish camera to providing handicapping analysis for all of the races. For many of us, myself included, our experience at Rillito was our first time working at a racetrack. These experiences served us well as interns at tracks around the country this past summer, and I am confident that the knowledge gained and skill sets used at Rillito will benefit us for our entire working lives in the racing industry.

I am optimistic that the Pima County Board of Supervisors will realize the positive impact that Rillito Park's racing has on Tucson's economy and especially on the University of Arizona's students. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to seeing Rillito host horse races for many years to come.

Sincerely,
Alexa Ravit
Graduate Student
Race Track Industry Program

I have a dream.

A dream that one day, Rillito Park will exist in PIMA County where it will not be judged by the number of soccer fields on site but by the character of the students that started their career in racing there.

A dream that one day, Rillito Park will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, “To provide the community with entertainment deeply rooted in history and to serve as a learning lab for the University of Arizona student body.”

I have a dream today!

Yes, this is a bit dramatic but it needs to be for the simple fact that the governing bodies that be fail to see the ramifications associated with their short-sightedness.

The possible shuttering of Rillito Park Racetrack is a tragedy waiting to happen. I personally find the thought of closing the track in favor of a youth soccer field complex appalling, especially when the two can co-exist through a multi-use facility. Currently, there are 12 fields, yet the soccer advocates want four more fields. Where does this stop? Will 16 be enough? What would stop them from expanding to 50 fields? Maybe we can even force some small businesses to close in order to accommodate them? Really, is there any difference between that and what is taking place at Rillito Park now?

The impact of this decision will be felt immediately and will create a rippling effect that will be felt for years to come.

When you look at things in the short term, the track employs people in the community and students at the university. The racetrack serves as a learning lab for all the students within the Race Track Industry Program here. Keep in mind, the program here is the only one of its kind in the country. This program is essential to grooming the future leaders of the industry.

The list of influential leaders that have passed through the university and had their future shaped by Rillito Park is a long one. You may have heard of Bob Baffert, trainer of the Triple Crown winner American Pharoah. Well, he got his first win of his training career at Rillito. Todd Pletcher, the top trainer by earnings the last several years, also came through Rillito. In fact, the alumni from the program permeate every layer of the horse racing industry, with many of them having worked at Rillito.

The state receives valuable tax revenue from the wagering that takes place during both live and dark days. The local economy is also stimulated through partnerships with local businesses and increased tourism. Local feed stores, the breeding industry, agriculture, and greenspace as well as various hospitality venues also directly benefit from the racing that is held.

What sometimes gets lost in the shuffle is the historical significance of the track itself. It is notable in that it marks the birthplace of organized Quarter Horse racing in North America. The 3/8ths mile chute is actually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a major tourist attraction for the city of Tucson and the state of Arizona.

In the long term, the effects are even more adverse. I am a graduate student here, and my out of state tuition is over \$30k per year. I rent an apartment here, dine here, and take in local attractions. The vast majority of students in the program are from out of state, so you can see how we have an effect on the university and local businesses. Having a learning lab in Rillito Park is one of the main reasons I decided to come here, and I am not alone.

In addition to the above reasons stated earlier, without local racetracks, it would be impossible to cultivate the future fans of the sport. At some point in a fan's life, he or she is exposed to live racing and falls in love with it. These are the fans who go on to participate in every facet of the game and support an industry that generates billions of dollars on all fronts.

In closing, the benefits of having a multi-use facility far outweigh the alternative. I hope this has allowed you to see the macro effects of this decision and what this means to the employees, students, breeders, and fans both here in Tucson and on a national level. I trust you will make the right decision for all parties, and that decision is a long-term lease and a multi-use facility.

Thank you,
Joe Longo
Graduate Student, Class of 2017

To whom this may concern,

My Name is Claudia Alvarez, and I am a student in the Race Track Industry Program (RTIP) at The University of the Arizona.

Rillito Park has provided crucial learning experiences to many current and former students of the RTIP at the university. The RTIP is the only program of its kind in the nation, and it attracts students from New York to Hawaii. Many students have left their jobs to attend this program and pursue their passion for horse racing.

For those of us who are not able to travel during the summer to participate in an internship, Rillito offers the experience of working at a racetrack and seeing how one operates. I was unable to work at Rillito during the 2016 meet, but I was able to visit several times and see all of the positions held by students and the opportunities to gain hands-on experience.

For the 2017 meet, I plan on operating the photo finish camera, which is one of the vital track jobs given to students. Students take on positions that are necessary for the track to function; they are not stuffing envelopes. Some students even work throughout the week in the racing office taking entries for the races. The students take on a variety of roles from director of social media to director of admissions to horse identifier to track handicapper. If you were to ask any of the students that worked at Rillito about the importance of their experiences at the track, they would tell you that their education in the Race Track Industry Program would not be the same without their time at Rillito.

Rillito is not just another track, another business, or another gambling venue. Rillito is an invaluable learning experience for those who want a career in the horse racing industry. The track may be small, but its impact is immense. Please listen to my plea to approve the request to extend the race meet another five years so that my fellow colleagues and I may have the opportunity to grow and prosper in this unique and exciting industry.

Sincerely,
Claudia Alvarez
RTIP Second Degree Student

Dear Members of the Board,

The Rillito Park Race Track is a valuable and historic fixture in Tucson for both members of the community and students in the University of Arizona's Race Track Industry Program (RTIP). Having moved to Tucson from Massachusetts in August to join the program as a graduate student, it was immediately clear that Rillito Park had a positive impact on the students that divided operational duties during the 2016 race meet. Students at Rillito simultaneously apply RTIP curriculum and develop relationships with the residents of Tucson that host them for nine months of the year. Their experiences at the track in 2016 cultivated a contagious passion for Rillito Park, not only as advocates for its existence but as believers in its growth potential under current management. It is imperative for this bond to flourish over the next five years. Promoting Rillito Park, one of Tucson's finest cultural icons, is critical to preserving the identity of an authentic Western city to which the roots of Quarter Horse racing can be traced. I urge the Board of Supervisors to approve the extension of the operating agreement through June 30, 2021. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
James Traester
Race Track Industry Program '18

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Rillito Park is a part of the fabric of Tucson and an important part of horse racing history. Rillito is the birthplace of Quarter Horse racing and a historical landmark. It provides affordable entertainment for families in Pima County. Additionally, Rillito serves the students of the Race Track Industry Program at the University of Arizona. Although I didn't work there myself, many of my classmates have received real-world experience working at the track that will benefit them as they begin their careers in racing. To take this opportunity away from students would be a mistake. Our program is renowned across the country for the quality of graduates who work in the industry. Rillito has become an integral part of the racing education our students receive during their time in Tucson. In many ways, it is a career launching pad for many of us.

I am not against soccer or any other type of recreational activity. I am a former athlete who recognizes the importance of athletics for young people. However, there are plenty of soccer fields in Tucson. I drive by many of them that are not in regular use. Does Tucson really need another soccer facility which will be seasonal due to the summer heat? The answer to that is no. Rillito can exist as a multi-use facility where soccer, horse racing, farmers' markets, and other activities can thrive. In order for this to happen, a lease needs to be extended to give the horse racing leadership of Rillito the incentive to make the capital improvements the track needs. The soccer interests who do not believe in the vision of a shared-use facility are doing a disservice to the community at large. They do not want to look at the benefits of a park which can serve as many Tucsonans as possible.

I urge you to grant the five year extension to the Rillito Park Foundation to allow racing to continue and Rillito Park to serve a wide cross section of the Tucson community.

Sincerely,
Keith Doleshel

Dear Supervisors,

My name is Nicholas Fanucchi, and I am proud to be a student in the Race Track Industry Program at the University of Arizona. I am usually not one who writes letters, but you have left me no choice. I am writing to you because I have heard that the racing meet at Rillito Park could potentially be cancelled for 2017 if the track is not granted a five year extension, so I am going to tell you what the meet means to me and what I think it means to my peers. The Rillito Park meet is an opportunity for every student to experience every aspect of a racetrack while having roles that matter. Last year, I had the opportunity to run the graphics for the live feed. I updated race changes, jockey changes, displayed the race results, etc. Other students got to run the photo finish, social media, and even have managerial positions. I ask that you let the Rillito Park meet go on for the next five years because it keeps students in the Race Track Industry Program engaged during a tough school year, and we love working there! Please, let the meet go on.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Fanucchi

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kevin Schnoor, and I am a student in the Race Track Industry Program (RTIP) at the University of Arizona. It has come to my attention that there is a good chance that Rillito Park will not run this upcoming meet if a five-year extension is not granted. I strongly urge you to reconsider this. Rillito Park has been a staple of Tucson for the last 70 years and really does possess a charm that few racetracks have. A big part of the reason that I decided to make the trek out here from New Jersey was because of the hands-on experience working at racetracks that I knew I would be getting at Rillito. I have always found that you learn more by doing than by using a pen and paper in the classroom. Rillito is a fantastic way for us students to apply what we are learning in class. It would be a shame if the students in these upcoming years are not awarded the same opportunity that I had last year and hopefully will have this upcoming meet. I do strongly hope you reconsider and allow Rillito to run this winter as well as in the future. The track is great for the city of Tucson and the RTIP.

Thank you for your time,

Kevin Schnoor
RTIP Graduate Student

Tucson is known for its history and the preservation of its history. Surprisingly, one of the city's most iconic landmarks is in danger of disappearing. Since the 1940s, Rillito Park Racetrack has been the site of some of the most important advances in horse racing. This history is not lost on the students of the University of Arizona's Race Track Industry Program. Students have the unique opportunity to experience the inner workings of the industry they aspire to be a part of while working at Rillito during its spring meet. The students face real-world situations involving all aspects of the business of horse racing. This offers students the ability to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to all areas of racetrack operations. The RTIP is one of the most unique college programs in the nation. The hands-on experience the students receive at Rillito is a benefit that cannot be replaced. Some of the most successful people in the multibillion dollar, international sport of horse racing have attended the RTIP, and Rillito has been an important part of the success of the students in the program. Please preserve Rillito Park Racetrack and allow it to continue to be an important laboratory for RTIP students.

Sincerely,

Scott Little
Student
University of Arizona Race Track Industry Program

Dear Pima County Advisory Board,

I moved to Tucson in August in order to participate in the Race Track Industry Program at the University of Arizona. After ten years in the workforce with a well-paying yet unfulfilling career, I decided this would be the best decision for me. The reason I moved across the country to attend the RTIP is that my chosen career field is difficult to break into unless a person is well-connected in the horse racing industry. Since I am not well-connected, the move to Tucson seemed like a wonderful way to get my foot in the door. Job experience directly related to my field of study is paramount in starting a career. This is why, aside from the lovely history of horse racing in the region, I would urge all of you to help us keep the Rillito race meeting going.

Sincerely,

Zach Taylor