RFD TV Presents
THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

AUGUST 2011
ISSUE 1

It is hard to believe that just over a year ago we started working on The International of Omaha. While I have no idea where the time has gone, I do know that we have made significant progress and, thanks to you and many others, this landmark event for Omaha will happen on April 20 and 21 of 2012.

Since we began brainstorming this unique equestrian event, many of the ideas we have had are coming to fruition. I wanted to drop you a note to give you a brief update about what has been accomplished and what is yet to be done.

Lisa Roskens



First off, look at our cool, new logo! The best part of our logo is the addition of RFD-TV as our title sponsor. We are so excited to be partnering with this innovative and dynamic group of people. Thanks to RFD-TV, we will be able to deliver a high quality entertainment event and the advertising power of a national cable television network. To top it off, one of our long-term goals of being nationally televised will be realized in our first year. This is truly a watershed opportunity for us.

EVENT DETAILS COME TOGETHER

The event details of The International are coming together nicely. We have secured CenturyLink, Omaha's main arena and Halls A&B of the convention center giving us appoximately 100,000 square feet of space for 240 horse stalls, a warm up arena and the expo/vendor area all in the same building as the competition facility. Terry Forsberg has agreed to help us manage all the

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details that pertain to the CenturyLink Center Omaha. Terry has nearly 20 years of experience managing all of Omaha's public event venues and handling all of Mannheim Steamroller's tours. Having Terry on our team, takes the guesswork out of how to get things done.

As long as we are talking facilities, let's talk lodging and parties. The Hilton Omaha has agreed to be our host hotel. This means that the skywalk to the CenturyLink will be open to exhibitors (credentials will be required for access after hours for security purposes) so you can stay and literally park your truck and not use it again until after the event is over. Special room rates will be available and we are working on getting reduced rates at other local hotels as well. We will be hosting several cocktail parties with the first one kicking off Thursday, April 19, 2011 for exhibitors and sponsors/donors. The other two nights, will be in the competition arena for our sponsors, donors and premier ticket holders. Budweiser and wine by Republican Distributors are providing the beverages. Purina has agreed to provide the food and yes, it will be people chow, not horse, cat or dog chow! All of this macro-event coordination as well as many of the sponsorships have been brought to us by our Executive Director, **Susan Runnels**. We are so very lucky to have found Susan who has extensive experience coordinating events and managing multi-faceted projects.

AN INCREDIBLE TEAM

The horse show team has been selected and finalized by our amazing show manager, **John McQueen**. John has been a professional horseman for over 30 years and has done everything from ride to train to manage, to course design to announce to judge. He manages some of the most popular shows around and completely understands the goals of The International.

Our course designer will be none other than **Buddy Brown**. For those of you who don't know Buddy, he has been a member of several United States National teams and has represented us in the Olympics. In addition to holding the World High Jump Record for a period of time, he is one of the most respected course designers in the country. We are very excited to have him on our team.

In addition to Buddy, we have secured **Max von Zimmerman** as our announcer. Max announces at some of the most premier events in the country and is particularly well known for his ability to explain the sport and promote sponsors. While Max will handle the public aspects of event communication, Robyn Eden has agreed to be our USEF Steward. Robyn will make sure that all the competitors understand the application of the USEF rules to our event.

We also have one of the best footing experts in the country, **Blake Alder**. Footing is a critical component to a successful competition and Blake has handled it at some of the biggest indoor venues around, so is very familiar with the challenges of transforming a multi-use space into one safe and suitable for jumping horses. (Footing to you non horse people means dirt and or limestone that cover the floor of the arena. This is a science. You need to have specific depth and consistency so the horse has a soft landing but that isn't so soft the horse will struggle to leave the ground.)

Finally, to top it off, the winner of the Saturday Night Grand Prix will receive an original sculpture by one of the Midwest's most well known artists, **Matthew Placzek**. If you have been to Omaha, it is impossible to miss his work as he has done the signature piece outside the CenturyLink and Children's Hospital, to name just two, but also has installations as far away as Austria and Taiwan. Check out his work at matthewplaczek.com.





To set an international-caliber standard of competition, lay the groundwork for hosting the World Cup Finals in the CenturyLink Omaha and change the way equestrian sport is presented in this country.



MORE THAN JUST A HORSE SHOW

You might be thinking that this all sounds great, but how are we going to pay for it. Having received our official 501(c)(3) designation earlier this year, we can accept tax-deductible contributions in addition to marketing sponsorships. Thanks to the generous contributions of our Pillar and Cornerstone donors and our title sponsor, **RFD-TV**, we have raised over $500,000. The prize money for the event is in a savings account and will not be touched for operations to avoid the pitfall of so many new events that are not able to pay the winners their due.

We still need to secure some more funding to make sure that The International sets a new standard for equestrian competitions in the country and has sufficient income after the event to make a charitable contribution to a program designed to help reintegrate our military service members after deployment. In order to lay the groundwork to host International and National championships, we need to attract new fans to the sport and in order to do that, we need to be more than just another horse show. We have special events lined up to do just this.

We are working with an award-winning musician and performer to design the production aspects of the event so it will have the lights, music and hoopla to make it fun beyond the competition. Outside of the actual competition, we have secured a very popular, interactive education exhibit called **EquiMania**! They have only been to the Unites States once before for the World Equestrian Games. Several of our local businesses are helping make the expo more than just a collection of tack stores.

We have also created a community outreach with the International. We want to underwrite field trips so we can bring elementary and middle school students to the International to expose them to biology and mechanics of these majestic animals and to create an awareness of the horse industry and sport. We are also hosting horsemanship badge programs for the **Boys/Girls Scouts** so they can attend the International and earn a badge. Lastly, we are in the process of securing funding to create educational and fun outreach programs for local social services agencies.

For our Pillar and Cornerstone Donors, our Sponsors and our Premier ticket holders we will have several opportunities to get behind the scenes at the event. We will have cocktail parties in the arena immediately before the event. This will give these guests the opportunity to see the size of the jumps up close, talk to some of the athletes and walk the course. In addition, we will provide guided stable tours and access to the warm up area so you can see all that goes into preparing these very unique athletes.

MONEY, MEDIA & MORE TO DO



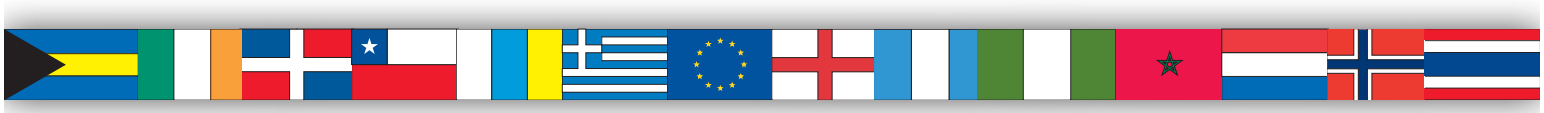


One final aspect of the International that we have in place is the foundation of a solid media plan. We have selected **Bailey Lauerman** to help us promote our event with the local press and on our social channels. Bailey has helped launch most of the major sporting events in Omaha such as the Olympic Swim Trials.

You can keep up to date on the latest and greatest about The International at our website: www.worldclasshorseshows.com. This site is so much more than we ever expected thanks to the talents of Chip Thompson. He is one of the best web designers we've found and has kindly donated his time to give The International a first class web presence. Our newest feature on the web is the "spotlight page" where are going to spotlight a rider, a horse or anyone in conjunction with our event. We have started a "Links" page with some folks who've asked to be connected to our site and are happy to add links if you have any ideas.

If you are a Facebook fan, you can find us at facebook.com/internationalomaha. In addition to the electronic media, we have been advertising in In Stride magazine so the equestrian community can plan their 2011 schedules to include The International. The ads have been prepared by Kelly Murkins and Kevin Hensel with the Burlington Capital Group who has donated all the work, printing and preparation of these ads. We also have several high quality pieces for marketing purposes thanks to Mike LaBroad who is advising us on the sponsorship solicitation and public relations aspect of The International. Mike is one of those rare individuals who has extensive creative talent and yet a keen business sense. He helps make sure that our art actually works for its intended purpose.

With all of these steps behind us, there is still much work to do. We are open to all suggestions, ideas, donors, sponsors and volunteers. Obviously, if you have any ideas for us, or want to make a contribution, please feel free to drop us a line.



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To create a new paradigm in the sport of show jumping in the United States that makes it a spectator friendly event leading to the professionalism and marketability of the sport for all involved.