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Graham Motion Honored as First “Touch of Class” Award Recipient *Maryland Horse Industry Board Presents Inaugural Awards*

HUNT VALLEY, MD (September 6, 2011) — Graham Motion, the Maryland-based trainer who won this year’s Kentucky Derby with Animal Kingdom and currently ranks as the nation’s fourth leading trainer of Thoroughbred racehorses, today received the Maryland Horse Industry Board’s (MHIB) first “Touch of Class” Award. The award was presented following the Board’s monthly meeting at a luncheon reception at the Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture in Hunt Valley.

“The equine industry is an integral part of Maryland’s cultural and economic heritage,” said Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. “We commend Graham Motion for his extraordinary achievements and for his dedication to Maryland’s horse industry.”

The newly-instituted awards program honors a Maryland horse/individual/team/organization or event who demonstrates the highest standard of excellence in the Maryland horse industry. The award will be given industry-wide, on a monthly basis, to recognize the many outstanding accomplishments of Marylanders in the horse world. Although the first recipient represents the horseracing segment of the industry, all aspects of equine disciplines will be considered and voted on for the honor.

“There are so many great horses, horse people and horse happenings in Maryland that we thought we should recognize and let people know about them on an ongoing basis,” said MHIB chairman, Jim Steele. “This is a strong, dynamic industry with determined and adventurous people and horses, exhibiting the best qualities of horsemanship all over the world.”

The award is named after Touch of Class, the small but mighty Maryland-bred mare who won two Olympic show jumping gold medals. She currently holds the Olympic record for number of clean jumping rounds in an Olympic competition and is enshrined in the U.S. Show Jumping Hall of Fame. The mare’s breeder, former jockey Jennifer Small, also attended the awards ceremony and gave her personal account of the mare’s accomplishments.

Motion, who bases his operation at the Fair Hill Training Center in Cecil County, had another big week at the end of August, winning the Grade I Del Mar Oaks in Del Mar, California with Summer Soiree on August 20 and the Grade II Ballston Spa Stakes at Saratoga, New York with Daveron on August 27. As of August 29, Motion had saddled 77 winners from 336 starts with total earnings of near \$6.5 million, ranking him fourth leading trainer in the U.S.

A large part of the MHIB’s mission is to promote and raise awareness of the state’s equine industry. The 11-member Board is appointed by the Governor and represents the 65,000 Marylanders who own, ride, work or volunteer in the horse industry. For more information about the MHIB, the awards ceremony or the Maryland horse industry, contact Ross Peddicord, executive director MHIB (peddicrd@mda.state.md.us or 410-841-5798).

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EDITOR’S NOTE: PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.