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by kip cornett

Welcome Home. Those words from Keeneland's President Bill Thomason underscored the feelings of many of my friends and neighbors--both inside and outside the Thoroughbred industry. They are all equally as excited about welcoming our guests to the Bluegrass as much as hosting the Breeders' Cup itself in 2015. While we are more than confident in Keeneland's ability to put on a world-class event, we also know that the Breeders' Cup experience in our city and region must deliver the same for our guests during their stay.

The bar has been raised in the past few years for owners, specifically both at the host track and the host city. The Breeders' Cup committee focus on this area is to be commended. As we all know, those who "put on the show" are extremely important. And we know that there is only one winner, so the experiences owners and their connections have before and after their race for a championship is crucial.

Lexington was once regarded as "The Athens of the West." And in the past 10 years, our city and region has been revitalized in many of the areas that once earned us this high accolade. A thriving independent restaurant scene fueled by local agriculture, an entertainment corridor in the heart of downtown and an explosion of local music venues has reshaped the way we and our guests enjoy our time here.

And let's not forget the booming rebirth of the bourbon industry. Our region's distilleries provide America's native spirit to the world--and fully embrace welcoming guests to experience their world-renowned craftsmanship.

Oh, did I mention the green belt of agriculture, centered on the Thoroughbred industry that moved National Geographic to declare the Bluegrass "One of 50 places to visit in your lifetime?" Our farms that provide most of the wonderful athletes that compete in the Breeders' Cup will welcome guests here like never before.

Lastly, let me say a word about hospitality. There is nothing--no music act so big, no dinner so tasteful, and no room so well adorned--that can top world-class hospitality. And that's something I know Lexingtonians can and will deliver daily to our guests. We will make sure every owner and their connections as well as race fans around the globe are thrilled with their visit to Keeneland and The Horse Capitol of the World.

After all, we want to make sure they gladly and excitedly will return again. [CLICK HERE TO SHARE THIS STORY](#)