## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Charles Town Adds WVBC Preview Handicaps to Race for the Ribbon Card May 11, 2012

**(Charles Town, WV)** – When the fourth Charles Town Race for the Ribbon program is run on September 22, there will be a new element added to the card – a series of restricted handicaps serving as a preview for horses competing in West Virginia Breeders' Classics XXVI four weeks later. The 11 race program, which has a 6:00pm EST first post, will again be anchored by the \$400,000 Charles Town Oaks for three-year-old fillies going 7 furlongs.

In addition to the Charles Town Oaks, Miss Shenandoah and Pink Ribbon, a pair of juvenile stakes for West Virginia breds - the Henry Mercer Memorial for colts and geldings and Rachel's Turn for fillies - round out the stakes lineup. They will be accompanied by handicaps representing six of the other divisions to be showcased on the October 20 Breeders' Classics program. The handicaps had previously been contested as open allowance races spread out over several cards in previous years.

"We decided to make them handicaps and bundle them into one day rather than spread them out," said Director of Racing Operations Erich Zimny. "People will be tuning in to watch some of the best three-year-old filly sprinters in the country and we hope to expose them to horses they'll see four weeks later in the West Virginia Breeders' Classics."

Some of the top female sprinters in the country were indeed on display in the 2011 Charles Town Oaks when the field included Grade I winner Her Smile, multiple graded stakes winner Hot Summer and Groupie Doll who has won two Grade I's this year, the most recent being a dominating 7 ¼ length score in the Humana Distaff on Kentucky Derby day – a race in which she broke Churchill Downs' 7-furlong track record.

As for the handicaps, the \$45,000 Roger Ramey Handicap for horses 3&up going 1 1/16 miles will serve as a springboard for horses going into the featured 1 1/8 West Virginia Breeders' Classic in October. The remaining five will all carry a \$35,000 purse and represent the final prep for horses going on to compete in the Breeders' Classics. All six of the handicaps will be for West Virginia-accredited horses with a preference going to those originally nominated to the West Virginia Breeders' Classics. Additionally, the change from allowance races to handicaps opens the door for the potential uncoupling of entries as the West Virginia Thoroughbred Racing Rules permit uncoupling in races deemed to be special events.

The first race for the West Virginia Breeders' Classics XXVI card on Saturday, October 20 is scheduled for 7:15pm EST. The races and purses for the entire Breeders' Classics card will be announced at a later date.