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CARRIAGE COMPANIES RESPOND TO INDUSTRY STUDY

Today's statement by Broderick Christoff of Charleston Carriage Works, is a **non-endorsement endorsement** of Charleston Animal Society's call for an independent, scientific, peer-reviewed study of the carriage industry downtown. "The carriage industry thinks they placed the ball back in our court, but the ball they sent back is flat," said Charleston Animal Society CEO Joe Elmore.

Christoff states that he speaks on behalf of the entire carriage industry downtown and that the industry now backs a study as endorsed by several local and national organizations including the TVMA (Trident Veterinary Medical Association), AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners), HSUS (Humane Society of the United States), and the ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).

However, Christoff says the industry will not make their horses and mules available to take part in the study. This should raise a red flag with the public. Clearly, a study cannot be done without the horses and mules that actually live and work in Charleston. To use a replacement herd as Christoff suggests would raise questions about the validity of the study and is yet another hurdle thrown in the way of getting answers on what comprises humane working conditions in Charleston.

Christoff's statement is a reaction to the fact that more than 11-million people saw the video of his horse "Big John" collapse on Meeting Street last week. The Charleston carriage industry knows that America is watching. It's time to move forward with a true, independent study. The research team will only come from a top-rated university that uses humane and the least-possible invasive research methods.

The point of the study is to clarify with independent research, what is the most humane working environment for horses and mules in Charleston. This independent study would provide unbiased and objective answers to questions that we receive year-round from residents, tourists and experienced horse owners, who worry about the working horses and mules downtown. The research would address questions involving heat, load, congestion and other stressors, including how they relate to each other.

Before last week's incident involving the collapsed horse "Big John," Charleston Animal Society had reached out to industry leaders to meet about the study, but was turned down. We are hopeful that a meaningful dialogue can begin with this new statement from the industry.

INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST



