

TRAVELING MAN

by Mary Marshall

Mike Whitler Travels all over the state for his job as Inspector for the Louisiana Thoroughbred Breeders Association

Mike Whitler is a traveling man. He enjoys the open road and all the people he meets along the way in his position as the horse inspector for the Louisiana Thoroughbred Breeders Association. Life enjoyed through the “windshield” as Whitler calls it suits him, and so do all the friendships he has made within the Louisiana horse community throughout the fourteen years that he has held the position.

“The best thing about this job are all the people I meet,” said Whitler, who resides in Shreveport. “I have developed some great friendships through the



years, and that is what I treasure the most. I have traveled to all the farms in Louisiana, from north to south, and enjoy the differences in the people and the culture.”

Whitler travels to farms throughout the state to inspect mares for their presence in Louisiana as part of the Louisiana-bred program that requires mares to foal in the state so that their offspring are registered Louisiana bred.

“Mares that leave the state during breeding season must return to foal in Louisiana by August 1,” said Whitler. “The offspring from these mares have a great impact on the economy

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of Louisiana. The identification of the mares comes primarily from scanning them for a microchip which confirms who they are. Other methods of identification that I use include markings and tattoos. A tattoo fades with time and not every mare has raced, so a microchip is the most consistent method of identification.”

Whitler has had many adventures throughout his career and said that many times people are not prepared when he arrives unannounced to identify their mares.

“Horse people are busy people, and there is never a good time,” Whitler stated. “Sometimes I call and can never get anyone to confirm a day or time, so as a result many times I just show up—the job must get done and I can bide my time and wait until they get done with the blacksmith or the vet. I am always friendly and cordial, but persistent.”

Whitler does not wear a suit and tie or drive a company car. Inspecting mares is primarily an outside job and requires boots and a vehicle that can plow through whatever mother nature has in store on any given day.

“I drive an Outback and wear good boots,” Whitler said. “Sometimes mares are not easily accessible, and you may have to drive or walk-through muddy fields to get to them. Not everyone has a manicured farm, and sometimes the location is rather remote. You might walk out into the field and the mares aren’t wearing a halter, are hard to catch, or somewhere else. You just don’t know what type of situation that you are walking into sometimes.”

One thing that Whitler noted about horse people is that they love to talk.

“I am on the frontlines with all these horse people who live rather

secluded lives,” he said. “Many have an opinion about everything and everyone in the horse business and would like nothing more than for me to share my opinion. That is one thing that I absolutely do not do—express my opinions in these conversations. I am not paid to share my opinion.”

Whitler doesn’t have much time for outside hobbies but does have a four-year-old Thoroughbred currently racing and a two-year-old that has yet to start.

“I do have a little skin in the game,” he said. “I am looking forward to the two-year-old making it to the races and enjoy watching the older horse compete. There isn’t any time to hunt, fish or play golf. I am always on the road serving the horse community and really enjoy my job, the people, and wherever the road leads.”



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