



## Delaware County Commissioners

Jeff Benton  
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To the Honorable Stephanie Kunze and members of the Ohio Senate Transportation Committee:

More than 75 years ago, a local harness-racing lover Joe Neville and Hank Thomson, the sports editor of The Delaware Gazette, hatched the dream of bringing harness racing to Delaware, Ohio. The steeply banked harness-racing track at the Delaware County Fairgrounds was already well-liked by local horsemen and, after a bit of advertising, a newspaper contest to name the race and the collection of a sizeable cash purse to offer as a prize, the first Little Brown Jug harness race was held in 1946. For one day, Delaware's population doubled in size. More than 27,000 people, hailing from across the U.S. and Canada, streamed through the track gates on race day.

But this wasn't just a 'one hit wonder.' Through the following decades, the Little Brown Jug increased in popularity, transforming from a Midwest horse race to the anchor of the Triple Crown of harness racing. Today Jug Day is not only a national sporting event but it remains an iconic community event. Schools and the majority of area businesses close for the day and local residents fill the grandstands and take up positions on the perimeter of the track. In 2019, nearly 50,000 spectators lined the track, a far cry from the race's humble beginnings.

We believe that a special license plate would be an appropriate way to promote the Little Brown Jug and honor the community pride that built and sustains it. The Little Brown Jug is a part of Delaware County history and a part of Americana. And, perhaps needless to say, I will be the first in line to get a special plate when it is issued.

Jeff Benton