McKinney Family New Owners of the Lazy E Arena and Ranch

From Track Magazine ....

Gary McKinney of Midland, Texas, confirmed to TRACK Magazine late Friday afternoon that Reliance Ranches has completed the purchase of the properties known as Lazy E Ranch and Lazy E Arena.
The transaction was closed Friday morning 11/15/13.

The 960-acre facility in Logan County some 30 minutes north of Oklahoma City includes the 7,400 seat Lazy E Arena; a horse breeding facility that currently stands more than a dozen racing-bred American Quarter Horse stallions; a training center with a 5/8th mile oval race track; barns for conditioning of sale horses; turnout, rehab and layup facilities for racing age horses; and facilities for year-round boarding.

McKinney, who operates Reliance Energy from its headquarters in Midland, owns Reliance Ranches with his son Micah and daughter-in-law Leslie. Reliance Ranches has been operating at the top end of the racing business for the past few years.

"I became fascinated with Lazy E in 1986 while I was watching the Timed Event Championships on television," Gary McKinney told TRACK. "I had been roping a few years at the time, and I knew then that roping at Lazy E had to be a tremendous experience. Little did I think that someday we would own Lazy E." Lazy E Arena was built by Ed Gaylord and opened in 1984 in time for the National Finals Steer Roping, an event that coincided with the National Finals Rodeo then in Oklahoma City. A few years later, the breeding operation known as Lazy E Ranch was begun, and such major stallions as World Champions and leading sires Special Effort and Easy Jet stood there.

The entire Lazy E operation was sold to Lazy E Holdings LLC of Las Vegas, who sold it for an undisclosed amount to Reliance Real Properties LP.

Lazy E currently has some 60 employees between Lazy E Arena and Lazy E Ranch.

Micah and Leslie McKinney and their six-year-old son Drake and three-year-old daughter Fisher moved from the Llano, Texas, division of Reliance Ranches in October to a new home a few miles from Lazy E in Edmond, Oklahoma. Micah and Leslie will manage the overall Lazy E operation from an office on the ranch property.

Micah and Leslie are deeply involved in the horse business. In addition to their Reliance connections, last year they founded the Racing Free Incentive Program. Micah serves on the AQHA Racing Committee and chairs the AQHA's Equine Health, Welfare, Integrity and Research Committee. He also serves on the Texas HBPA and has served on the AQHA's Champion Selection Committee. He is currently running for a director position on the Oklahoma Quarter Horse Racing Association's board. Leslie is a mentor for the American Quarter Horse Youth Association.

"Owning the Lazy E is such an amazing opportunity for us. Micah and I grew up in awe of the legacy of the Lazy E and will work extremely hard to maintain that history and the respect that it deserves," said Leslie. "We have had the opportunity over the years to meet and work with some brilliant horsemen. We have won with them, lost with them, served on boards with them and now we look forward to providing exceptional service to them through the Lazy E Ranch." "Our family is electrified by the chance to work with the talented staff already in place, and we are motivated by the way our industry is joining forces to preserve its reputation and heritage." Micah said, "Oklahoma has welcomed our family with open arms, and Drake's response to the news of the closing was, "you mean we can go out there any time we want?" This morning the first thing he did was pick out his clothes to go to the ranch."

"The Lazy E already means so much to us, and we will not let it down. We will use our energy to work hard for our clients, and we will serve them with integrity and honesty." Eddie Willis, who currently ranks as the nation's No. 1 trainer with earnings of $3,324,686 through November 15, will be basing his training operation at Lazy E. Willis trains both Feature Hero and Coronado Cartel.

Gary McKinney said they will work General Manager Dan Wall to expand current events at the Arena while also attracting other events and possibly creating new events - all this in addition to a long list of capital improvements for the arena. The 70,000-square-foot air conditioned facility also has a club and restaurant overlooking the arena. The Lazy E Arena has hosted a multitude of events including barrel racing, calf and steer ropings, tractor pulls, motor sports, PBR events, the Timed Event Championship and co-produces the Ram National Circuit Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma City.