

PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER – SPRING, 2016



Photo by Ray Shea

This issue's Photo Trivia is a little different from the usual. Instead of asking you to identify a person or a race car, we're asking you to identify this location and, for extra credit, the subject and year. Of course, it's somewhere in NJ.

As you may have guessed, this is none other than New Egypt Speedway undergoing reconstruction. This photo was taken in February, 1997 and shows the beginning stages of converting the track from asphalt to dirt.

Ft. Dix Speedway, as it was known originally, was built in 1946 as a ¼ mile dirt oval. The track was paved in the early 1960s. It was operated off-and-on, sometimes under NASCAR sanctioning, until it closed at the end of the 1996 season with John Blewett III as the final Modified track champion.

Enter Rick Grosso, Sr. and family of Skillman, NJ, who bought the track in 1997 with the intention of turning it into a first-class dirt racing facility. Everything was replaced or improved, and a 1/3 mile clay oval was installed. In 1998, motorsports promoters from all over the nation named New Egypt Speedway as "Most Outstanding Rehabilitation of a Speedway" during that year's Daytona Speedweek ceremonies.

The rejuvenated facility's opening day was held on April 4, 1998. Despite cold weather and the threat of rain, a capacity crowd filled the grandstands. The very first car on the track was Street Stock racer Kenny Guyer (in a practice session). In recognition of this, Promoter Andy Belmont awarded Guyer the pole starting spot in the first feature, which he went on to win! Other feature winners that night were Kenny Brightbill in the Modified division and Sportsman division driver Larry McVay, who went on to win the championship that year.

In 2006, the facility was purchased by Bill Miscoski and Fred Vahlsing. Under their ownership, the track was reconfigured to its current 7/16 mile D-shape. Vahlsing became the sole owner in 2013.

From its humble beginnings in 1946 to today, New Egypt Speedway continues its great racing tradition of "Thunder in the Pines". Visit their website at www.newegyptspeedway.net to check out the 2016 schedule.

Thanks to Earl Krause and Pete Wortman for their contributions to this piece.