

Annual Membership Meeting Held

The 2010 TGA Annual Membership Meeting was held on Saturday, March 20 at the TGA office in Lorena. Members were served a barbecue lunch and had the opportunity to visit with each other before the meeting.

Tommy Azopardi, President of Texans for Economic Development, and Daniel Becka, Grassroots Coordinator for Win for Texas spoke about the recent primary elections, the upcoming 2011 legislative session and our strategy for VLT legislation. Members were urged to sign up for information on the Win for Texas website. Information on Win for Texas was in the February TGA newsletter, or you can call the TGA office for more information.

The Board discussed putting up a billboard on the TGA property to further promote racing and VLT legislation. The TGA will investigate the county requirements for a billboard and, if possible, will put together an advertising campaign for the billboard. Ed Garner, TGA Board member, said 4 million vehicles pass by the TGA each month.

Secretary/Treasurer Tuddy Dietz went over the financial statement for 2009, followed by President Harlyn Goebel's summary of TGA activities in 2009. Harlyn discussed the consolidation of racing purses from Valley and Gulf Coast Racing to Gulf Greyhound Park to stabilize purses in Texas and keep members in business.

Ray Campana, Chairman of the Elections Committee, announced the results of the election. Directors David Peck and Charlie Pevehouse were re-elected as Board members; Tuddy Dietz was re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer, and John Liberatore was elected as Vice President. Due to Liberatore's election, a vacancy was created on the Board, and President Goebel appointed Paul Watt to fill the vacancy.

TGA Executive Director, Diane Whiteley, gave a presentation on the TGA's current status, showing the membership, Texas-bred puppies and Owner Awards data from 2004 through 2009. She discussed the TGA's activity in the 2009 legislative session which included exempting greyhounds from the "puppy mill" bill.

The 2010-2011 TGA Initiative was presented, which includes the development of grassroots and public support for racing through information packages to be given to greyhound adopters, legislators and media. Whiteley discussed the emphasis on greyhound safety through the recent Greyhound Safety and Track Surface seminar held at Gulf Greyhound Park in February. The Seminar was videotaped and copies will be available in a couple weeks. The TGA will continue to be active with the Racetrack Management Services Agreement (RMSA) with Gulf and the Texas Racing Commission injury data.

The TGA is forming the Texas Greyhound Foundation (TGF) which will fund the costs of care for greyhounds with a major injury, in a program with Texas A&M veterinary college. The TGF has received pledges of monetary support and the program is in its formative stages, with implementation to begin this summer.

Internet wagering was discussed in greater detail, showing that pari-mutuel wagering is being diverted from the racetracks, purses and the state. Whiteley estimated that about \$125 million was wagered online annually in Texas, with greyhound wagering about 20% of that total. She discussed the strategy that the TGA was taking to capture that revenue for greyhound purses.

A Board of Director's meeting followed the Membership Meeting, which consisted of reports from the RMSA Committee, the Stakes Committee, the TGA Track Committee and the Promotions Committee.

John Dalton reported on the progress of the RMSA Committee; John Liberatore reported that the Texas-bred stakes schedule at Gulf would consist of a \$50,000-\$60,000 Spring stakes event and a Fall puppy stakes. James Parker reported that sand and rock would be purchased to fill in the track drive. Ed Gardner reported that he had passed on a promotions idea to Gulf Greyhound Park and would be involved in the billboard once its price was determined. He also introduced two new TGA members.

President Goebel then appointed Committee members.

The TGA has set out an ambitious 2010-2011 agenda and needs the support of all of its members to achieve its goals. A copy of the initiative will be sent out to members. If you are interested in participating in any of the TGA programs or committees, please contact the office.