

TEXAS GREYHOUND ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO EBRO TRAGEDY

The TGA membership is shocked and saddened about the suffering and death of greyhounds discovered at the Ebro, FL race track kennel compound. It is important to understand that these were the actions of one individual, not an industry. Help was offered and available; it was refused and the individual deliberately acted in secret.

The TGA joins with the National Greyhound Association, the American Greyhound Council, the American Greyhound Track Operators, state greyhound associations and every greyhound owner in calling for aggressive prosecution and severe punishment of all individuals involved in this tragedy.

The TGA also calls for a complete investigation on the circumstances that allowed for this travesty to happen and the strict enforcement of state rules currently in place for prevention.

Our business is greyhound racing, but greyhounds are not a business. They are gentle and graceful athletes that depend on us to do right by them.

All greyhounds at Texas tracks are required to have an owner lease on file with the racing secretary. Florida does not have this requirement. Greyhounds may be moved between Florida tracks without the owner's knowledge. In the past, the TGA has urged the Racing Committee International to recommend this simple procedure in all states to help document the location of greyhounds and the kennel taking responsibility.

We know that a track closing can be done safely. Texas experienced a major track closing with Corpus Christi Race Track on December 31, 2007. Beginning in October of that year, the TGA and Texas Racing Commission (TxRC) worked with track management to put in place policies and procedures. A complete inventory of greyhounds was taken. Three adoption kennels were opened with daily oversight by both the TxRC and the TGA. Any greyhound not going home or to another track was taken to the adoption kennel. A disposition form was required for any greyhound leaving the compound, stating the greyhound's destination and the person taking the greyhound, with detail down to the license plate of the vehicle. A TxRC judge checked on the kennels daily until every kennel was empty, including the adoption kennels. Security stayed in place in the kennel compound until ALL dogs were placed. The TGA and the track paid for all meat, meal, flea and tick control, worming and veterinary care; owners were billed \$75 for the care of their greyhound until placed in adoption. Not one greyhound was left behind and all were accounted for. It was a strong joint effort.

Valley Race Park closed its seasonal meet without any incident for many years. Proactive track management, responsible kennel owners, TxRC oversight and a dedicated adoption group made sure that not one greyhound was left behind.

Gulf Greyhound Park runs year-round and kennels are subject to inspection at all times. Greyhounds are weighed at every performance and have to be within 1 ½ pounds of their set weight; each greyhound is checked at weigh-in by the TxRC veterinarian with oversight by a TxRC judge. The kennel compound has tight security 24/7. An elected kennel representative coordinates with track management on any potential problems. All greyhounds have owner leases on file with the Director of Racing, who compiles a weekly inventory. Gulf maintains an adoption kennel in its compound, including personnel, at its own expense.

It is hard to defend against a person going “postal”, but we think the rules, policies and procedures are in place for the welfare of the greyhounds in Texas. Greyhound owners, track management, kennel owners, trainers, helpers, TxRC and TGA have to continue to work together to make sure our most precious athletes are protected. Greyhounds are first priority.