

GNN National News Briefs

Florida, October 31, 2010

Ronald John Williams, 36, a greyhound trainer who had a racing kennel at Ebro Greyhound Park, was arrested today on 37 counts of felony animal cruelty charges, following the discovery of 32 dead greyhounds in his kennel. Another five were found alive, three of them severely malnourished; the five dogs are expected to survive. Food for the dogs was found rotting in a broken freezer and several of the animals were found with duct tape tightly wound around their jaws and necks, said Washington County Sheriff Bobby Haddock. "We don't know if it's combination of trying to speed up the process or keep them from barking," he said.

Necropsy results on the 32 dead dogs confirmed they died of starvation and dehydration. Haddock said it was obvious that some of the greyhounds had been dead for weeks, possibly never fed again after the racing season ended September 25. Williams is being held in the Washington County Jail on \$74,000 bail.

Suspicion about Williams' kennel was raised in late October when he brought eight dogs to Ebro's adoption facility. "Those greyhounds were underweight and appeared . . . to be very unhealthy," said Mark Hess, the track's assistant manager. In collaboration with the local chapter of Greyhound Pets of America, a call was placed to the state's Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering. On October 29, state investigators visited Williams' kennel, which Hess called a "horrific scene."

Sources: The Walton Sun: Felicia Kitzmiller; The Miami Herald: Associated Press; ABC News: Sarah Netter

Alabama, October 4, 2010

FBI agents armed with arrest warrants for legislators, lobbyists and the owners of the state's largest electronic bingo casinos, were all indicted in a scheme to buy and sell votes that prosecutors called "astonishing in scope." The indictments came six months after prosecutors and the FBI stunned legislative leaders by informing them that an investigation was under way into vote buying related to an effort in the Alabama Senate to pass electronic bingo legislation.

At a press conference in Washington, Lanny A. Breuer, assistant attorney general for the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, said, "Today, charges were unsealed against 11 legislators, businessmen, lobbyists and associates who, together, are alleged to have formed a corrupt network whose aim was to buy and sell votes in the Alabama Legislature in order to directly benefit the business interests of two defendants, Milton McGregor and Ronald Gilley."

McGregor, owner of two greyhound tracks, the Birmingham Race Course and Victoryland, was arrested at his home. McGregor has spent millions over the years trying to influence pro-gambling legislation.

Source: The Birmingham News: Charles J. Dean

West Virginia, September 23, 2010

The Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino-Racetrack closed for two weeks beginning September 7 to complete more than \$450,000 worth of renovations. The renovations were prompted by a spike in the injury rate. According to greyhound injury reports kept by the West Virginia Racing Commission, 62 greyhounds died or had to be euthanized at the Wheeling Island Hotel-Casino-Racetrack between January 2008 and September 2009, while more than 700 were injured. The records were obtained by Grey2K USA and brought to the attention of the media in January.

Sources: The Charleston Gazette: Associated Press; State Journal; The Intelligencer: Casey Junkins

Massachusetts, August 19, 2010

Operators of 75-year-old Wonderland Greyhound Park in Revere announced its closure after the legislature failed to pass an expanded gambling bill which would have allowed slot machines at the state's horse and dog tracks. The track, a simulcast wagering parlor since a voter-approved dog racing ban took effect January 1, 2010, had continued to offer wagering on races simulcast from other racetracks. Wonderland was sold to Suffolk Downs earlier this year.

Source: *The Boston Globe*: D.C. Denison

New Hampshire, July 9, 2010

Gov. John Lynch signed a bill banning greyhound racing in the state on Thursday, July 8. The signing of House Bill 630, known as the Greyhound Protection Act, was announced in a prepared statement by the Humane Society of the United States. Between 2005 and 2008, nearly 1,200 greyhounds were injured while racing in New Hampshire.

Source: *Foster's Democrat*: Editorial

Kansas, June 30, 2010

The Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission revoked the licenses of The Woodlands in Kansas City, Wichita Greyhound Park and Camptown Greyhound Park in Frontenac. Mike Deines, a spokesman for the KRGC, said the license revocations were automatic, taking effect June 28, thirty days after the close of the Kansas Legislative session. "Currently there are no licenses to run racing in the state of Kansas," Deines said.

Source: *Wyandotte Daily News*: Mary Rupert

Massachusetts, May 19, 2010

The owners of the North Shore Kennel in Lynn filed a lawsuit against the state seeking \$1 million in damages, arguing a 2008 voter-approved dog racing ban ruined their local business, forcing them to send their dogs to Arkansas and Florida. The kennel owners say in the suit that the law violates their equal protection rights under the Constitution because it singles out dog racing while allowing horse racing to continue. Doug Pizzi, a spokesman for the kennel owners, told *The Boston Globe* that the referendum "took away people's property away without any compensation."

Source: *Boston Herald*: Associated Press; *The Daily Item*: Thor Jourgensen

Rhode Island, May 14, 2010

Gov. Donald Carcieri signed legislation that allows Twin River to eliminate live greyhound racing, which had been required by law. The owners of Twin River filed for bankruptcy protection in 2009 and sought legislative approval to eliminate the requirement to offer 125 days of live racing in order to offer simulcasting. The track had been required to pay the Rhode Island Greyhound Breeders Association more than \$10 million a year.

Source: *Boston Herald*: Associated Press

Wisconsin, December 31, 2009

Dairyland Greyhound Park in Kenosha, the last of five greyhound tracks in the state, closed its doors ending 19 years of operations. "Stand-alone greyhound tracks have gone the way of pay phones and eight-track cassettes," said Roy Berger, the track's general manager.

There are 12 kennels at Dairyland; each kennel holds 60 to 72 greyhounds. According to a spokeswoman for Midwest Greyhound Adoption, the closure will affect approximately 400-600 greyhounds.

Source: *Kenosha News*: Deneen Smith

Arizona, December 19, 2009

Phoenix Greyhound Park closed its doors December 19, ending more than 50 years of greyhound racing. The track continued its simulcasting operation until December 31, and then transferred its simulcasting license to Apache Greyhound Park in Apache Junction. Dan Luciano, the track's president and general manager, said, "The days of filling a facility that holds ten to twenty thousand people for racing are gone."

Source: The Arizona Republic: Amy B. Wang

Wisconsin, October 21, 2009

The state Division of Gaming launched an active investigation in late October into the deaths of six greyhounds that occurred in August. Four of the dogs bled to death and two more died on the weekend of October 17. Donna Gilson, a spokeswoman for the agriculture department, said her agency took samples of the food the dogs were eating to determine if the food was contaminated. There were no follow-up reports on the investigation.

Source: Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel: Don Walker