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MELBOURNE DOG TRACK SHUTS DOWN LIVE RACING – LEAVING BOTH GREYHOUNDS AND TRAINERS IN THE LURCH

Melbourne, Florida – Melbourne Greyhound Park (MGP) management has been busy making clandestine preparations for the days ahead, but instead of printing up programs for July's live-racing schedule, they have spent their time printing up pick-slips for hundreds of greyhounds and scores of kennel workers. MGP greyhounds ran their last race of the season on Sunday afternoon and then they were summarily fired. This unexpected move is tied into a shifting of race dates, state gaming regulations and a preference for the dollars gleaned from card room operations.

Although there had been some rumblings for several days, the announcement came as a shock to those both inside and outside the kennel compound. "No one imagined that management would act so precipitously and leave both the dogs and the kennels with nowhere to go," said Greyhound Protection League (GPL) President, Susan Netboy. Insiders say that the track is giving them a mere week's time to get out; then, the burden and expense of the dogs will shift to private adoption organizations.

MGP's seasonal closings have been problematic for years. However, in previous years there was plenty of time to prepare and everyone knew it was coming. With the concerted efforts of adoption groups, large numbers of MGP greyhounds have been moved out-of-state and into a safe-haven year after year.

"This situation is unprecedented even in the world of greyhound racing where bottom-line financial considerations always trump the welfare of the dogs," said Netboy. "The track owners ought to be ashamed of themselves; it's their moral and ethical responsibility to pay for the care for the pets for as long as it takes - which could be a good long time. They have thrown the whole adoption world into a crisis and these are not the only greyhounds that need to be saved."

The Greyhound Protection League is a national, non-profit greyhound welfare organization.