# Florida’s Greyhound Tracks See Revenue, Attendance Rise

# Live attendance and wagering at Florida’s greyhound race tracks are experiencing steady growth, according to the Florida Division of Pari-mutuel Wagering reports that live betting (handle) was up 11.4% state wide in November, with a handful of tracks performing well above the state average.

# Leading the pack in November was Jacksonville’s Best Bet Orange Park with their live wagering 15.4% over 2012 totals. Daytona Beach saw a staggering 21.8% increase in dollars bet at their facility. The dog track in Jacksonville revamped their promotions efforts increasing contests, lucrative giveaways, adding three tiered distance racing and even showcasing their primary product, the greyhound racing, in television commercials. Derby Lane and Tampa both saw 12% growth as both tracks have full time racing advocates in marketing and public relations. Recently Sanford Orlando Kennel Club published that they saw impressive 18.8% gains in 2013. Their attendance increased and an overall 9.1% gain in wagering. The success was attributed to creating a more attractive guest experience and attention to marketing and promotions.

# “Sanford Orlando Kennel Club exists in one of Florida State’s most competitive entertainment market,” comments James Blanchard, President of the Florida Greyhound Association (FGA). “They are seeing success, without poker rooms and slots machines, because they are invested in providing an exceptional dog racing entertainment experience.”

# The state’s Gambling Impact Study reports that the Florida greyhound industry produces an estimated $ 200 million dollars in tax revenue. Profits from dog racing purses are paid out to the kennels and owners that race the greyhounds, many live, work and spend their income in the Sunshine State.

# Reports of greyhound racing’s declining profitability are often one sided and purposely do not take into account that a number of tracks have closed in the past twenty years. In 1993, there were 18 greyhound tracks operating in Florida. Today, there are 13. The smaller industry pool in 2013 versus 1993 naturally shows a decline. These reports are often submitted by special interest lobbyist groups and track owners looking to repeal the statute requiring them to run live greyhound racing in order to keep their high-profit-low-overhead slot machines and gaming rooms.

# However, comparing tracks handle performance against previous years illustrates that live greyhound racing is holding it’s own while providing revenue for the state and supporting a small business community of family run operations.

#