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VictoryLand to suspend live greyhound racing

Simulcasting and pari-mutuel to continue

4:51 PM, May. 10, 2011 | Comments



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Montgomery Advertiser, Lloyd Gallman

Written by
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The following statement was received from Lewis Benefield, Chief Operating Officer of VictoryLand.

It is my sad duty to announce that the regular schedule of live greyhound racing at VictoryLand will end after the final race on Saturday, May 14. Races will be staged on May 18th, May 21st, May 25th, and May 30th as greyhounds from across the country participate in a Juvenile Futurity. All live racing at VictoryLand will be suspended as of June 1.

We will continue to provide pari-mutuel wagering on worldwide greyhound and thoroughbred horse racing daily except for

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Tuesdays. Fine dining and other customer favorites will be available at The Kennel Club restaurant and Willie's Cafe. A complete list of our broadcasts and hours of operation is available on the internet at www.victoryland.com and by phone at 800-OUT2WIN (800-688-2946).

Live Greyhound racing has been conducted continuously at Macon County Greyhound Park in Shorter, AL, since September 1984. For almost 27 years, greyhound racing and other offerings have provided entertainment to hundreds of thousands of people and employment to thousands.

Economic realities make it impossible for us to continue offering live racing after the Juvenile Futurity. Greyhound racing will resume when we can again offer the electronic bingo games which for many years subsidized the cost of live racing.

Those games were approved in 2003 by 76% of Macon County voters in a constitutional amendment referendum authorized by unanimous votes in both houses of the legislature. Despite the fact that no court has ever ruled electronic bingo to be illegal, we were forced to end bingo operations last year in the face of threats by former Governor Bob Riley.

The economic cost of Riley's action has been enormous. VictoryLand was one of the largest employers in Alabama with over 2000 employees, and has paid over \$200 million in taxes and funded over 100 charitable organizations since its opening. The end of live greyhound racing alone means 200 employees will lose their jobs.

We continue to search for ways to resume offering electronic bingo. As a candidate for Governor, Robert Bentley promised to honor constitutional amendments that allow electronic bingo such as the one in Macon County, and we are hopeful he will keep that promise. In the mean time, we look forward to seeing our friends and patrons at our continuing simulcast sessions and in our dining facilities.

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