

N4T Investigators: Is TGP at finish line?



Tucson - It may be the worst financial news yet for Tucson Greyhound Park.

The News 4 Tucson Investigators have obtained the latest financial investigation report on TGP. It says the track net's loss in 2013 was \$544,000. The audit was conducted by a private firm and was part of the track's license renewal process. Other key audit findings:

- TGP did not produce a profit in the last five years
- The track does not have sufficient current assets to meet its current liabilities
- TGP cannot sustain future viability if its Florida owners don't put more money into it

Despite the criticism, the Arizona Racing Commission last month approved TGP's license renewal for another three years, based on the owners stated willingness to pour money into the track.

Susan Via is a Greyhound advocate-she owns three of them-and a former prosecutor who's been fighting for years to get TGP closed. Via isn't surprised by the track's latest reported financial problems.

Via says she doesn't expect the owners to spend more money on improving TGP's revenues. She told the News 4 Tucson Investigators, "I'm not surprised that the owners wouldn't pour money into a rat hole," Via

said.

Via says she is angry that TGP gets a hardship tax credit from the state. The credit was approved by the legislature about 20 years ago when casino gaming began eating into track profits.

From fiscal years 2009 through 2013, the state has given TGP a total of nearly \$1.9 million in tax credits. Our state lawmakers also created a tax exemption for simulcast and off-track betting.

Via says, "We're the only state that does not tax the off-track betting or simulcast handle. We lose millions upon millions of dollars in tax revenue because most of the money is from off-track betting, not live racing."

Steve Kozachik is a Tucson councilman, and even though the track is in South Tucson, he's been an outspoken TGP critic because he believes the tax credit is hurting all Arizona taxpayers.

"The sad fact is the state legislature hasn't had the guts to get rid of the hardship tax credit," Kozachik.

"The taxpayers of the state are subsidizing that track, and you get rid of that tax credit and this thing would sink like the boat anchor that it is."

Susan Via says, "They're not going to put money in this track. They'll put in the bare minimum they have to get their license."

TGP General Manager Dale Popp did not return our repeated calls to try to get his response to the latest criticism. The last time we went to TGP, after getting permission to be there from the public relations manager, Popp kicked us out. We will continue to report on TGP as we uncover new developments.

If you have a story you'd like us to investigate, email us at investigators@kvoa.com, or call our tip line at (520) 955-4444.