

## **Twelve horses die in South Florida Training Center fire**

by Steve Wolf, for Stathis Enterprises

**Lake Worth, FL ---** A barn fire has claimed the lives of approximately 12 horses at the South Florida Training Center early Wednesday morning (March 16). It has been reported that 23 horses were housed in the single barn that was engulfed in flames and that 11 have been rescued. Two have been taken to a local equine hospital in critical condition.

"This is just devastating," said farm owner Sam Stathis. It was his barn that caught fire. Horses were also stabled in the barn for trainers Roman Lopez and Thomas Haughton.

"I am sick with grief over the horses that have lost their lives," Stathis said. "The Palm Beach Fire Department did all they could and saved many of the horses."

Two firefighters were taken to an area hospital to be treated for injuries.

The fire was first reported around midnight and the Fire Department will be conducting a full investigation into the cause of the fire.

Located on 441/SR 7, the South Florida Training Center is a Standardbred harness racing facility and home to nearly 500 horses. The single barn was the only one affected by the fire.

Stathis, owner of the South Florida Training Center, also owns Stathis Enterprises and is the founder of the World Chariot Racing Federation.

A horse racing online radio program, Post Time with Mike and Mike, has already set up a GoFund Me account to help the horsemen and the training center. The group will split all funds raised through the site between trainers Roman Lopez and Thomas Haughton to help offset the cost of damages because of the fire.

Anyone wishing to donate to the fund can go to [www.gofundme.com/SouthFLTrainingCtr](http://www.gofundme.com/SouthFLTrainingCtr) or by visiting [www.posttimewithmikeandmike.com](http://www.posttimewithmikeandmike.com).

"The early outpouring of concern from so many people this morning is tremendous," Stathis said. "I am financially fine, but hope that everyone could support this fundraising for Roman and Tommy. They have lost everything."