

In my blogs, I've noted how the bowling community rallies around their own when times are tough. This support of their own is what sets bowlers apart from other sporting communities. Once again, we have another example of bowlers rallying around their own.

The coronavirus has made life challenging in ways that almost all of us have never experienced before in our lifetimes. The government decisions on handling the coronavirus and its effects on the economy are not what I am writing about; that's another blog for another place. Rather than focus on that, I am writing on the positive energy of how the bowling community – the proprietors, membership associations, and bowlers themselves – have come together to support those centers in dire straits due to concerns with the ongoing pandemic.

On Saturday, October 10th, rallies were held at six different locations in support of the Greater Portland area centers that have been unable to open due to health and safety restrictions. The idea for the rallies began with the Oregon State Bowling Proprietors Association (OSBPA) and then began to include the local membership organization, the Greater Portland USBC (GPUSBC), as well as the state membership organization, the Oregon State USBC (OSUSBC). Following the lead of Executive Director for the OSBPA, Tawnya Zwicker, all three organizations helped spread the word and helped generate some media attention for the bowling centers in the Greater Portland area that are still shut down.

This is a remarkable demonstration of cooperation for those old enough to remember the days when long decades ago, the proprietors and membership organizations were often at odds with one another. Instead today, the proprietors and membership organizations often collaborate and help each other to further our sport of bowling – and these rallies are just the latest example of these collaborative efforts. Behind the scenes, Zoom meetings were held, phone calls were made, texts and e-mails were exchanged, banners made and distributed in a coordinated effort, rightfully led by the proprietors, but with the support of both the local and state membership associations. Local media came out and approached the rallies and helped distribute the message that bowling centers are Clean, Safe, & Ready to Roll!

The bottom line is that the Portland area centers are hurting after over seven months of having their doors closed. Will the message get through that bowling is safe enough to open? We can only hope, but once again, the bowling community shows their mettle in helping their own – and this time its not just a fallen bowler, it's the very lifeblood of our sport – our bowling centers.

One last thing, while this was generally for the Portland area centers that are closed, this has an effect for the entire state. With rising infection numbers and the colder seasons upon us, as well as the craziness that just seems to keep on coming in 2020, it is not entirely out of the realm of possibility that other counties outside the Portland area could be shuttled back to Phase 1, and with that, bowling centers in those counties would again be shut down. With the attention that the bowling proprietors

have made showing the Portland centers are as clean and safe as possible, this lays the groundwork to hopefully help government officials make adjustments as they realize bowling's viability in the event counties are moved backwards. Hopefully that will not be the case, but even if that awful scenario were to come to pass, one thing will be certain – the bowling community will keep on fighting and will continue to work together to ensure the survival of our sport.

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