


## *Bowling Centers Association of Wisconsin*

November 17, 2021

To: BCAW Board of Directors

From: Yvonne C. Bennett, CAE 

RE: Our Accomplishments Since 2014

As I prepare to turn over the reigns to Neil Stremmel as our next BCAW Executive Director, it has given me time for reflection regarding my nearly eight years serving as your executive director. Because the board of directors serving now and heading into a new era is very different from the one which hired me in early 2014, I thought a summary of all we've done together might be enlightening and helpful as you move forward.

**Strategic Planning** Strategic Plan 1.0 (2014-2019) set the stage for many of the accomplishments we have achieved during my tenure with BCAW. Five critical areas were initially identified: Governance, Communications, Members, Technology and Financial Stability. With our next iteration of the strategic planning process started in August 2019 ("Seeing 20/20 and Beyond"), discussions were initiated that lead to the hire of a new BCAW Executive Director for 2022. I hope our belief in and desire to plan and work strategically will continue.

**Governance** A new governance model, to include new bylaws, board structure and the consolidation of two corporate entities into a single association was achieved in our first year. Additionally, board policies were created to standardize and formalize aligning with best practices in association management. A more thoughtful and strategic process has been implemented for board development and succession planning. The committee structure was fine-tuned to reflect the needs of the association. In addition to the standing committees designated in our bylaws, ad hoc committees are being utilized to tackle time-sensitive topics facing the association, on an as-needed basis.

**Financial** With renewed focus on the financial health of the association, improvements were made how we measure financial success of our programs and the organization. We implemented new fee structures for the HSBC & MSBC to not only cover administrative costs of these programs, but also to contribute to the bottom-line of the organization. Through improved efficiencies, we were able to cut costs in contracted services and employee expenses. We utilized BPAA's invoicing and dues remittance process, thereby eliminating staff time and direct costs associated with the annual BCAW/BPAA membership renewal process. We implemented new media platforms to eliminate expensive and outdated

publications like the BCAW Headpin News (print) newsletter and an antiquated website. Through tighter staffing, we reduced payroll and related expenses by implementing “summer office hours” during our off season (Memorial Day through Labor Day). Through the COVID pandemic, additional cost-saving measures were implemented including furloughs of staff in 2020 and 2021. The association received nearly \$73,000 in Federal assistance during the pandemic (\$50,000 in PPP and \$23,000 in ERTC). BCAW’s unrestricted reserves increased from \$168,458 (1/1/15) to \$294,456 (1/1/21), an increase of \$125,998 or 74.8%. A strategic and fiscally responsible investment policy was created and implemented, providing additional revenue to the association as we transitioned our management of over \$800,000 in scholarships held by BCAW for others (i.e., WI Grand Prix and HSBC District Scholarships) to SMART. Financial Policies Manual created and implemented. We eliminated what had been a historical cashflow issue every summer, resulting in some staff not being paid June through August prior to 2014. New sponsorship relationships forged, including 900 Global, Classic Products, Apple Vacations and MolsonCoors. Commission based sponsorships created/improved (i.e., Wisconsin Souvenir Milkcaps and Kids Bowl Free).

**Operations** The BCAW office operations & administration has continued to evolve to meet the ever changing needs of the association and its members. Staff structure and work assignments have reflected these necessary changes. Infrastructure including our telephone and email systems were updated to support our operational needs. We went from a single phone line and email account for the entire office, to individualized phone (with voice mail) and email accounts for each staff member. A new website was designed and launched in late 2015 to improve efficiencies in data entry & retrieval, communications, e-commerce and online registration. Improved accounting systems with a detailed chart of accounts, utilizing Quickbooks and accounting principles identified as best practices in the non/not-for-profit sector have been implemented. The association’s banking relationships were consolidated from three banks to one. Established merchant services credit card processing through BPAA Smart Buy partner FirstData. A corporate credit card was secured to reduce expense reimbursement and provide financial rewards to the association for credit card purchases. IT services and technical support were improved, at a more cost-effective rate for services necessary as BCAW updated to more sophisticated use of technology in the office.

**Human Resources** Human resource systems and management tools were created and implemented, including an employee handbook, job descriptions and performance evaluation process. Continued staff development, to meet the ever-changing needs of the association has been paramount since 2014. This includes the utilization of volunteers when appropriate for our events and tournaments. The evolution will no doubt continue under Neil’s leadership. Implemented time-tracking by program/service to allow for payroll allocation to reflect true costs associated with the programs and services provided by BCAW. Utilizing BPAA Smart Buy partner ADP for our time tracking and payroll processing, thereby receiving discounted payroll services. saving BCAW approximately \$1,500 per year. Updated all employee benefits to standardize and assure compliance with laws and regulations. Changed from a SEP retirement program to a simple IRA retirement plan.

**Membership** BCAW has been the leader in membership growth and retention for the past seven years, unparalleled by any other BPAA affiliated state association in the country. We have gone from 170 member centers to the current level of 225, in spite of a continued loss of commercial bowling centers in Wisconsin. Member retention (excluding closed centers) has been over 95% year-after-year. We are at our highest level of bowling center membership in nearly 40 years. We have initiated membership and program services for bowling centers in the lower region of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Unique programs such as the Wisconsin Vintage Alleys Tour have created value for our small vintage era bowling centers and continues to provide public relations and media opportunities for BCAW. Starting in 2015, Bowlapalooza has proven to be an important and cost-effective relationship building investment year after year. Supplier Memberships have expanded to create added value for our bowling center members. Pro bono relationships such as the most recent one with Journey Consulting, LLC/Jayne McQuillan are benefiting BCAW members who choose to utilize their expertise.

**Member Services** BCAW has sought new ways to meet our mission of "improving the profitability of our members" through the programs and services we provide. We have been assertive in the marketing and promotion of BPAA Smart Buy Programs, and took a leading position when the BPAA/Pepsi Agreement renewal took place in 2017. Not only have we helped our members improve their profitability, BCAW has also financially benefited through the increased revenue share received from BPAA. Our increase from 2014 to 2019 (pre-COVID) was \$37,896 to \$45,698 or 20.6% over a five-year period. The BCAW Award of Excellence was created in 2016, with 19 recipients since its inception. Over the past three years, BCAW applied for and received USA Bowling grants (four per year) to provide coaching seminars free of charge throughout Wisconsin at BCAW member centers. Improved decision making made possible through the utilization of member surveys administered through Survey Monkey.

**Government Affairs** Monitored legislative and regulatory issues facing the bowling industry after we terminated our retainer relationship with DeWitt Ross and Tony Driessen in 2014. Established relationships with like-minded groups including the Tavern League of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Restaurant Association, Personal Property Tax Coalition, Wisconsin Manufacturing & Commerce as well as supported national level initiatives with the American Society of Association Executives on issues impacting trade associations, including BCAW. In the absence of a lobbyist on retainer, established relationship with lobbyist Steven Conway for the benefit of the association for several years (2015-2020). Navigated through the turbulent times of the COVID pandemic, ultimately resulting in signing Steven Conway on retainer to formalize his representation of our association in 2021. Strategically, BCAW is poised to re-engage with our state government, agencies and elected officials through the creation of an ad hoc committee in 2020, which became a standing committee in October 2021.

**Marketing & PR** Wisconsin continues to be a leader in this area, creating positive exposure for bowling on a local, state and national level! We enjoy outstanding relationships with the editors of all three bowling industry magazines (Bowlers Journal International, BCM and International Bowling Industry). Several of our bowling centers and proprietors have been featured in print (newspaper and magazines) as well as local television. We have created "top of mind awareness" of bowling through our efforts. Specific initiatives include the Wisconsin

Vintage Alleys Tour, BVL Jersey Fundraiser, Bowl Wisconsinbly, new ownership/new member highlights and regular reporting to BCM Magazine, the official publication of BPAA. Since 2014, we have expanded our communication and marketing efforts through utilization of our newly designed website, Facebook and Constant Contact. The 11<sup>th</sup> Frame Blog is a valued channel to get important BCAW information out in real time via social media. Relationships with the Tavern League of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Society of Association Executives have also provided new marketing opportunities for BCAW to promote bowling in recent years.

**Tournaments** We continue to operate some of the best tournaments for youth bowlers in the country. Administration of our WI High School State Bowling Championships has continued to improve throughout the years. We restructured our Wisconsin Adult-Youth Scholarship Tournament, moving away from the flawed BPAA International Family Twosome and subsequent American Family Scholarship Tournament; creating the opportunity for growth of this event benefiting our youth bowlers with more scholarship dollars awarded at the state level. In 2021 we awarded scholarships to every youth bowler advancing to the WI Pepsi USBC State Finals, a precedence we will continue into the future, made possible as a scholarship provider participating in USBC's SMART Program. While the Wisconsin Adult Pins Over Average Tournament did not gain traction or support state-wide, we were responsive to member input to create something for adult bowlers.

**Scholarships** New scholarships have been created and awarded in several of our youth events including the HS All Star Team Challenge, HS State Bowling Championships and MS State Bowling Championships. We institutionalized our BCAW Scholarship Program, while at the same time creating a new funding mechanism for our five \$1,000 scholarships awarded annually. We transferred more than \$800,000 from BCAW's administration to SMART. This included sunsetting the Wisconsin Grand Prix Scholarship Program, which took over two years to successfully complete. With the utilization of SMART for scholarship administration, we have created a new revenue stream for more scholarships in the future. An ad hoc committee has been appointed to generate ideas on how to provide even more scholarship opportunities in the coming years.

I know this seems like a lot to read, and it is! It is a lot to read because we've accomplished a lot over the past eight years. We still have areas for improvement and growth. This is an exciting time for the association. I look forward to the continued strategic discussion necessary to take BCAW to the next level under Neil's leadership. The interrelationship between the volunteer and staff leadership cannot be underestimated. Staff and board working as a team with a common goal . . . the association's mission . . . to improve the profitability of our members! All that we've accomplished and will accomplish, is because of this one guiding principle . . . shared responsibility and mutual accountability which is only possible with open, honest and transparent communication.

It has been my ultimate pleasure to work with and for bowling as the BCAW Executive Director. I will cherish my time and relationships with each of you. I know our journey isn't over as I begin the next chapter in my life in a new role with you.