



9/15/2020

Washington Brewers Guild  
Virtual Meeting

1. Welcome (Greg Brandt of Iron Goat, WBG President)
2. Safe Start Update from Guest Speaker, Nick Strueli, Executive Director of External Affairs, Office of Governor Jay Inslee
  - a. Nick has managed restaurants all over the Olympia/Lacey area before entering government. He understands that our outdoor season is ending and will be problematic for our businesses this winter.
  - b. Our case counts peaked in August and have been on a good downward trend since. Shutting down gyms and bars were two big pushes to stop the spread of COVID. The Governor's office has been working hard to not just shut them all down all the way. So, limited operations to outdoors. The food requirement was an acknowledgement that many breweries could hold a restaurant license and if they operate like a restaurant, so they should be able to be open as restaurants are.
  - c. Conversations are happening now to consider how to keep as many businesses alive as case count is declining.
  - d. Nick and the Governor's office are open to all ideas and suggestions as to how we can operate more fully while staying safe and keeping the case count declining.
  - e. Question: any chance of movement away from indoor table parties needing to be all from the same household? It is hard for businesses to enforce. Talks are happening, but nothing yet.
  - f. Question: Any chance of upping the table max from 5? They are thinking about it, but no signs it will change soon. 6 feet between tables is what they are hearing is the bigger problem for restaurants.
  - g. Question: Will food trucks be considered to meet the kitchen/food requirement for occupancy and business operations. Short answer is no. Nick is more interested in moving toward some indoor service without a food requirement. Perhaps getting back to the restrictions bars/restaurants initially reopened with.
  - h. Alex Dittmar – same household question again. Many of us are geared towards people getting together with friends.

- i. Bale Breaker – Who enforces? Is it LCB or Health Dept? The LCB sets state level policy. Local Health Departments can apply and enforce their own additional restrictions.
3. LCB Update and COVID-19 Compliance Enforcement Report, Guest Speaker Justin Nordhorn, Chief of Enforcement, LCB
- a. From Annie – Thanks to the LCB for giving us and our bar/restaurant friends so much flexibility in these challenging times. This is a whole new level of collaboration, so Thank You!
  - b. Nordhorn has been chief for last 9 years. Has a policy committee that meets often, especially since COVID has hit.
  - c. LCB sits on the Emergency Operations Center and also fields complaints that are called in, even if they are outside the LCB's general purview. There are roughly 20,000 licenses in the state. While that's a lot there are far more businesses that don't hold liquor licenses.
  - d. If an issue escalates, they will pass off to the most appropriate regulatory agency.
  - e. Main concern is public safety. Social distance, mask wearing, food service, etc.
  - f. Quick response is prioritized.
  - g. Often just send letters. Sometimes visits, if many complaints.
  - h. The idea is to provide information for licensees so they can make informed decisions about how to run their business.
  - i. So far, breweries have done a great job and have had very few complaints.
  - j. Since mid-March about 59,000 complaints across all WA businesses. LCB has fielded 7,300 of those. Many of those are duplicates, so really only about 5,500 complaints. The #1 complaint is that people aren't wearing masks appropriately. #2 is social distancing violations, 26%. Employee safety is less than 2% of the complaints they have dealt with.
  - k. L&I and Dept of Health are sometimes the appropriate agency for a violation, not the LCB.
  - l. LCB is now meeting with local agencies to make sure everyone is on the same page and give more consistent answers and enforcement.
  - m. Phasing is another complicating factor, including modified phases (e.g. phase 1.5) and that various counties are in different phases.
  - n. A high percentage of complaints are from perception, not necessarily violations. LCB realizes that just because a complaint came in does not mean there was a violation.
  - o. LCB is trying to help people comply. They are not in it to be punitive. They want to help us comply and keep ourselves, our employees and our customers safe.
  - p. Some of the state webpages, in particular the DOH website have reports with data and tables that show what is happening with case counts.

- q. Food service issue: Chief Nordhorn does not think we should have food tied to operations for breweries and wineries, but he doesn't get to make the call and they need to be careful to respect legislation and procedure.
  - r. Arguing policy with your local enforcement officer isn't probably the most productive idea. They need to be pretty black and white to make clear and consistent enforcement decisions. However, Chief Nordhorn is open to more philosophical discussions. There is no harm in voicing your ideas or asking for something!
  - s. Question – Making brewery tasting rooms supply food makes breweries compete with the food trucks that they have always worked with, who are struggling, too. It also puts food non-experts in the situation where they need to serve food to keep their business alive. Can food trucks fill the food requirement for breweries? Sadly, no.
  - t. Questions—Are the penalties \$10,000 and loss of license for a violation? The LCB has a uniform penalty matrix. First violation is 5 day suspension or \$500 fine. A second violation is a 7 day suspension. However, if a business is not protecting public safety, a 180 day COVID emergency closure can happen, when people are intentionally endangering the public and flouting the rules. The biggest risk for breweries is probably the impact of this with your insurance company who may not want to do business with you or might raise your rates way up or not be willing to cover your brewery at all.
  - u. COVID intentional repeat offense penalties would escalate much more rapidly than non-COVID related issues.
  - v. The LCB is trying to categorize offenses such that they won't have inappropriate undue impact with insurers.
  - w. Is it legal to ask patrons if they are in the same household? It is. If they say yes, you are advised to just seat them.
  - x. Question: can the LCB give positive recognition for those investigated who have shown good behavior/action/compliance? At this time, that is an extra step they do not have time for, unfortunately.
4. Guild Finances Update – Scott Houmes, WBG Treasurer
    - a. It's been a tough year for the guild. We have lost 3 of 4 main revenue centers, Cask fest, Winter fest, and the Summit. We have reduced expenses as much as possible. We even cut Tamara's hours back severely for a while. We have her back now. We appreciate your dues! We need your support. Thank you!
    - b. Thanks to Scott for staying on as Treasurer when no one ran for his position.
  5. Guild Staff Report and 2020 Virtual Base Camp Details—Tamara Rice, WBG Membership Director
    - a. Thanks to all for supporting the brewing community!
    - b. If you are having any issues making payments online, reach out to Tamara.

- c. Base Camp is Nov 9-13. Ten talks, two a day. One in the morning, One in the afternoon. Virtual only. Virtual workshops. We are accepting speaker proposals for the next few days. Please submit your ideas!
  - d. Stoel Rives has stepped up as our major sponsor.
  - e. Talks will be recorded and available if you miss them in real time.
  - f. We are sorry we could not do the summit again this year. It was a lot of fun and very informative last year. We look forward to doing it again next year.
  - g. Again, we are looking for speakers. If you want to share your knowledge, make a proposal! If you want to learn from someone who does something really well, nominate them!
6. Open floor--Annie
- a. Breweries are having issues with people willing to lie to sit together inside. Groups of more than 5 are now breaking into multiple fives and taking over the place not respecting masks and social distancing. It is putting business people in a bad situation.
    - i. We are looking at a speaker for Base Camp for de-escalation and having these tough conversations.
  - b. Crucible shares experience that LCB has been cool and communicative and helpful. Don't be scared!
  - c. We are working to get breweries open for on-prem retail without a food requirement ASAP.
  - d. Greg from Scrappy Punk, encourages all to behave as if you are in person and not as an internet troll or road rager. You probably agree with folks on social media more than you may realize.
  - e. Take care of yourselves, everybody. There's a lot to stress out about, but try to take some time to keep yourself sane!
  - f. The state COVID "complaint process" includes an online form and a telephone hotline.
  - g. Bale Breaker – Thanks to Annie and Tamara for all the good work and information. You are a tremendous resource!
7. New Business
- a. None.
8. Cheers and Adjourn