

2019 OKHT Cancellation - Statement of Transparency



Our rationale for making this statement:

- 1.) To help us with our next event to avoid the same pitfalls.
- 2.) To be truthful and above all else transparent with our membership.
- 3.) To answer many of the questions we have received prior to the Picnic.

The Vote:

A motion was made to cancel the OKHT and was subsequently tabled at the June meeting of the LBC Executive Committee. It was agreed to continue moving forward with the event and to monitor the event registration. If 2019 event registration had not reached 80% of 2018 by the July meeting then the motion would be brought to the table again. As of the July 16th meeting the registration percentage stood at 39% when compared to the same time the previous year with an estimated final total ridership of around 100. The motion was reintroduced and the final vote was taken by the Executive Committee following discussion. The decision was not taken lightly and there was impassioned debate concerning the decision on both sides.

The vote was as follows: On the motion by Steven Jent to “Cancel the 2019 OKHT”, Diane Bellafronto seconded.

AYE

Bekki Livingston, Secretary
Diane Bellafronto, Treasurer
Mike Sewell, VP Advocacy
Steven Jent, VP Communications
David Wittry, VP Education

NAY

Andy Murphy, President
Gail Blevins, VP Racing
Dirk Gowin, VP Touring

The motion passed by a vote of 5-3.

Opinions expressed by those voting to CANCEL:

A leadership void existed:

In the past, the OKHT has been planned and supported by a volunteer OKHT chair with support from a volunteer committee of dedicated individuals from amongst the club membership. This year no one stepped up to the plate and the responsibility fell upon the club's Exec Committee and President who volunteered himself to make the attempt. In truth, all lacked the bandwidth to take this on without the support that has existed in the past. There was not someone solely committed to putting the event on, and thus getting ahead of the marketing and notifications to drum up riders never occurred. Likewise, an OKHT Committee was ever formed thus responsibilities and roles were never defined nor delegated. Everything was falling upon too few individuals that made the commitment to advance the ride. We needed leadership, structure, monthly meetings, consistent communication, and a definition of responsibilities as well as accountability for events and/or a timeline - none of these existed.

Internal communication was poor:

Due to other commitments and limited bandwidth the Exec Committee did not meet from March to May in 2019. During this time, very little communication occurred concerning the state of planning for the OKHT. No decisions were made. Very little event progress was made. This placed

planning and organization severely behind schedule. Rough plans for the OKHT were begun in late 2018. Potential routes, SAGs, Starting and Ending locations and ride style (length, one/two day) were proposed and discussed. However, following this good start, communication faltered and no decisions were made. It was not until Early in 2019 that these proposes were finally evaluated and the decision to make the 2019 OKHT a one day ride from EPTS park was made.

Registration was surprisingly low:

Even without internal leadership really driving advertisement, the ride date is well-known as it happens every year. It shouldn't have been a surprise to anyone in LBC that the ride was coming up. Regardless, the number of registrations received for the event were significantly down to the point where it was making the event not worth having. This was true of both registrations from within the club and without. Simply put, the ride was receiving very little support from its parent entity either in actual registrations or word of mouth.

Profitability:

While the best projections, including sponsorship money, showed the ride turning a slight profit, there was concern that the board was over estimating the amount of event expense reduction that was possible. Based upon the financials of the previous year the ride could, if expenses were not drastically reduced, incur a significant loss for the club.

It would be unfair to our sponsors:

Profitability, if achieved, would have been achieved on the backs of our sponsors and we didn't have enough riders that were monetarily invested (registered riders) to justify taking sponsor money. It was worried that if we allowed <100 riders out, with only a handful of riders doing the signature 125 mile Pottershop/Bardstown route that the club would irrevocably damage our reputation with many of our generous sponsors and that we would not see their sponsorship investment again for future events.

It would be unfair to our membership:

Hosting the ride with drastically deflated numbers would not justify the huge number of hours that would be required from membership volunteers that would be required to support the ride.

We were not prepared to host the event:

With 8 weeks to go very little infrastructure for the ride was in place. Only 2 sags were confirmed and only the starting location had been reserved. The remaining SAGs were not planned for nor established. The lunch facility (location and staffing) was not yet reserved. Volunteer duties had not been defined nor leadership designated to oversee and or organize them. Volunteer registration which is typically open months in advance had not yet even been discussed much less established on the website for registration purposes. The routes had not been traversed and signage and or route markers had not yet been planned. An entity to perform the advertised chipping of the ride and Pottershop was not in place.

Safety:

The state of the ride planning and organization brought into question the safety of the ride. Due to all the above there was a growing concern that the club could not only put on a successful event this year but that the needed support for the ridership would be substandard placing participants safety into jeopardy which could not be tolerated.

Opinions expressed of those voting NOT to cancel:

The Ride's Tradition:

The OKHT is a 40-year-old tradition that should not be stopped. Even if the ride is not as successful as in the years past that does not mean that we as a club should stop hosting it. Even with

deflated registration it was perceived as more beneficial overall to continue the tradition and rebound the following year than to stop the ride for a year and attempt a return.

Event / Club Perception and Reputation:

If the ride was canceled it would be a bad mark on the club and there was concern that this ride or any type of signature event put on by the club in the future would have to carry the stain of this cancelation upon it. Placing the event and possibly the future of the club in general in jeopardy.

Profitability:

The best profit/loss estimate showed that the ride, even with diminished turnout when compared to 2018, would still return a profit if expenses when compared to the previous years financials were properly managed / reduced. Given that the club incurred a significant loss in 2018 this potential profit is needed to help offset what was feared to be a potential greater loss in 2019.

The OKHT is our principal fundraiser.

Without hosting the event we jeopardize not only this year's fund raiser but the existence of future club fundraisers. In 2018 the club incurred a major financial loss. This loss without the positive offset of the 2018 OKHT would have been much larger. Without the event, the club may be in a larger financial hole at the end of 2019 when compared to last year and if a signature event is not revived the long-term solvency of the organization is in doubt.

My parting words:

I can speak for myself in saying that my perception was that no one on the Committee wanted to cancel the ride. We have all ridden and volunteered countless hours on previous OKHTs and consider it a source of pride that our club can put on a signature event of its magnitude. We hope that the tradition continues in the future and that we can properly plan for and prepare a ride that can not only be safe but a source of pride for everyone in the club as well. However, as evidenced, we cannot do it alone. Planning an event of this magnitude takes focus and dedication above what 1 or 2 people can provide. If the LBC is to move forward with a signature event to support the club then what is needed is your help in making that happen.

Steven Jent
LBC - VP of Communications