

## District 15 – Marketing and Communications Report

September 2015

Our District has four Regionals each year. The responsibilities for hosting those Regionals are delegated to the Units. In general, we need to deliver a higher value experience for our guests. While it is often difficult to shift gears and to improve upon the current processes it is necessary that our Tournament Chairs adopt a more expansive effort, so that our players receive a quality experience.

Ramping up the District training program for Tournament Chairs will certainly be a benefit and we may want to require the Regional Tournament Chairs to complete such leadership training.

**Oklahoma City Regional** – This year there was a new venue and improved Hospitality. Some of the players who had shunned the OKC Regional, due to the Biltmore Hotel, came back this year. There were a lot of nice comments on those two improvements.

Attendance was down 6% and the Table count was down 5%. Tournament financials have not been provided as of this date, but increased expenses and decreased revenues is usually not a good sign.

Marketing for this Tournament was practically non-existent. The general climate could be described as 'cold'. No one seemed to be acting as a Host/Hostess and welcoming players. The Partnership desk did little to facilitate pairings.

Schedule – This Tournament continues to operate on a schedule that has 6-7 concurrent events. Several events are either cancelled or played with less than 5 tables. The concerns of the District Board are not being taken seriously.

**Tulsa Regional** – The T-Town Tournament had the same venue and hospitality as in prior years. Linda Goersch really did a great job of turning this Regional around.

Attendance was up 14% and table counts were up 16%. Tournament financials have not been provided as of this date, but revenue should be up.

Marketing followed the recommendations of the District and Linda really did a great job of getting the word out. We sent out 7,500 targeted emails to players and this helped to attract a lot of players.

Unfortunately, Linda & Bo Goersch will be moving back to Illinois soon. The Tulsa Unit really needs to develop some new Tournament Chairs.

**Wichita Regional** – A new venue and a new management team has re-invigorated the Wichita Regional. Bridge players like casinos and so attendance will be up substantially for this years' tournament.

We expect that attendance at this Tournament will increase by 30% over the prior year (2013).

Richard Bowman and Charles Wiggins have really done a great job in turning around this Regional. They have good instincts and they should be taking on more responsibilities in their Unit.

We supplemented the local marketing by sending out 7,400 targeted emails.

**Kansas City Regional** – I have not been contacted by them.

**General Comments:**

**Schedule** – The small table count in the 199/299er events remains a big concern. There should be some consideration to running 499er events.

**Partnership Desk** – Out of town players need some assurance that their request for partners is actively being pursued. Partnership Chairs need to contact those players and let them know that they have been matched up. Too often, our Partnership Desks are handled on a do-it-yourself basis. When players contact us in advance of a tournament, we have a duty to locate partners for them.

**Marketing Tournaments** – Our Tournament Chairs have not embraced their duty to promote their tournaments. In March I was at a Sectional in Springfield, MO. There were tournament flyers for a Regional in Omaha and for one in Edwardsville, IN. There were no flyers for any D-15 tournaments. Within the following three months, there were 8 Sectionals and one Regional in our District. This is an embarrassing observation.

**District Requirements** – Tournament Chairs are required to submit their financial information to the Treasurer and the Board. They must send a photo and information on their Tournament results to the District Webmaster. For some tournaments, these requirements are not being met and there does not seem to be any follow up by our District Management Team.

We have discussed our concerns that some of our Regionals are not delivering the type of player experience that is desired.

In some cases, there has been noticeable improvements, however much remains to be done. Perhaps the most notable observation is that our experienced Tournament Chairs are slow to adapt to the standards that are sought.

Hopefully we will see the overall standards for our D-15 Tournament experience rise.

Respectfully Submitted,

Len Fettig