



## Braidwood Lions Club

245 W. First St. Braidwood, IL. 60408

Phone: (815)791-8093 / Fax: (815)458-3842

Web: [www.braidwoodlionsclub.org](http://www.braidwoodlionsclub.org) / Email: [braidwoodlionsclub@yahoo.com](mailto:braidwoodlionsclub@yahoo.com)

President: Scott Howard

Secretary: Joshua Bolatto

Treasurer: Daniel Wilson



May 7, 2020

Good evening dear friends,

In recent months, our world has been turned upside down by the COVID19 pandemic and has undoubtedly, in one way, shape or form, changed the very way of life for every person in our community, our country. From the very basic of functions to the most advanced, we have had to adapt and modify to the current “social norms” that have come about as a result of this pandemic. Many of the activities and traditions that we enjoy and often times take for granted have had to be placed on hold in order to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our communities from this invisible enemy. Impacts have been felt on every level of our economy, within our own homes, our communities and our nation. At a time when we believe that the spirits of our families and community are in need of a boost and something to look forward to as we look for the light at the end of the tunnel, we would love nothing more than to be able to provide you with that sense.

All of this and more makes it extremely difficult to bring you the message that I have for you this evening. Following the release of yesterday’s five-phase “Restore Illinois” guidelines, careful consideration and lots of discussion, our club has chosen to cancel our 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest for this year. We believe that our reasoning, which is outlined below, for making such a decision is sound and justified.

The safety of our community, our volunteers and the families who have come to know and love our festival is of the utmost importance to us, which helps us to realize that we have made the right decision. We know that there will undoubtedly be those who feel that we have made the wrong decision and we respect the fact that everyone is entitled to their own opinions on the matter. We also know that there are going to be lots of questions moving forward, which we hope most of the details below will answer. But we want to reassure you that we are not done forever. We may be taking a break this year, but are fully planning on picking back up where we left off in 2021. We would like to thank everyone for their continued support of our club’s mission and endeavors as we continue striving to provide the best humanitarian sight & sound services and community activities, events and beautification projects that we possibly can.

To our dedicated volunteers who put their hearts and souls into our festival and give of their time and talents, we can’t thank you enough for what you do. We all share in your disappointment as we know how much this festival means to us all. Many of us, myself included, have come to think of our festival as the highlight of our Summer season. There is no greater feeling than being able to see all of our hard work and plans come to fruition as we watch the smiles, laughter and enjoyment that is derived from it. All of our volunteers have become our extended families and as such it is important to us that they stay safe and healthy during these trying times.

Sometimes the right decisions can be the most heartbreaking to make. However, knowing that we have made the right decisions for the right reasons help to soften that emotional blow that all of us are experiencing.

Thank you again to everyone for your support and we wish you all nothing but good health and hope that everyone remains safe during these trying times and the months ahead. We look forward to seeing you all next year, July 15<sup>th</sup> thru 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021!!

Sincerely,

Josh Bolatto

Braidwood Lions Club

Summerfest Operations Coordinator

## Details Regarding The Cancellation Of 2020 Summerfest

**Q:** Is the festival completely cancelled for 2020?

**A:** Yes it is

**Q:** What lead you to make this decision?

**A:** Our decision was made based on several factors, including the following;

1. First & foremost, the safety and wellbeing of the families who have come to know and love our annual festival along with the many volunteers who put their all into making this festival happen is of the utmost importance. Even though things may have started to slow down in regards to the COVID19 virus, we feel that due to the close and high contact nature of our festival (rides, games, food vendors, entertainment, hand on activities, etc.) it would be irresponsible of us to encourage those of all ages to participate in such activities. Undoubtedly, the transmission of this virus will still be possible for months to come and we would feel terrible if someone who came out to enjoy themselves contracted the virus from doing so.

2. Planning for a festival of this size takes several months with much of the planning and expenses being recognized in the month or two prior to the festival. The overhead cost associated with putting on the festival is quite high and we depend on income from several sources to help ensure that our festival can still operate and remains somewhat profitable. Most of our expenses are incurred before the festival even begins. It would most certainly be a large gamble to incur the large expenses and potentially not generate enough income to pay them off.

3. Following the release of the five-phase “Restore Illinois” guidelines, large events such as ours are included in phase 5 titled “Illinois Restored” which allows for events such as festivals, conventions, etc. to resume. To date, our area is currently in phase 2. Even with two months left until the date of our festival, there is still too much uncertainty on what phase our region will be in come the middle of July. Choosing to proceed with our festival would again be taking a large gamble on our part which could have a major negative impact on our club if we ended up having to cancel our festival at the last minute.

4. Due to the increase in unemployment and financial impacts which are being felt by almost every household in our community, we know that disposable income has become extremely restricted for many. Unfortunately, it does cost money to attend a fair or festival. Whether it be from purchasing food and drinks or playing games, buying tickets to ride carnival rides or purchase items from vendors, etc. we know that more and more families across the county are focusing on spending their money on the important expenditures and necessities and we encourage them to continue to do so. We also believe that we would stand to see a decrease in attendance during the festival. Even though things may be slowing down in regards to the virus, many families will still be in a heightened state of awareness and will remain increasingly cautious when it comes to surrounding themselves in large crowds during events and activities.

5. Our festival relies heavily on monetary sponsorship donations from our business communities in order to help offset the cost of providing the free live entertainment and activities for those attending our festival to enjoy. As of current, we have already noticed a large decrease in the amount of sponsorship donations that we have received so far which is understandable. Many of the businesses in our community and those from outside of our community who donate financially to our festival have been affected by the current economic challenges that they have been faced with. From having to cut back on their operations and reducing hours to making the difficult decision to lay off or reduce their workforce, the effects that they are feeling are painful at best. We appreciate their continued support very much however; we feel that it would be wrong of us to ask or expect that they continue their financial support during these trying times.

**Q:** I have already submitted an application and payment for a vendor space during the festival. Will I receive a refund?

**A:** Yes, anyone who has sent in payments for flea market vendor spaces will be receiving a refund. We will be processing those refunds and getting them back as soon as possible.

**Q:** My company has already made a sponsorship donation to this year's festival? Can I receive a refund?

**A:** There will be two options.

1. We can keep the donation you made this year and save it for use during next year's Summerfest. Your company will receive full recognition during the 2021 Summerfest for the corresponding sponsorship level. We will not solicit your business for additional sponsorship funds next year.
2. If your business would like to be refunded for the amount of your donation, we will gladly do so and will process the refund as quickly as possible. Please contact our Festival Operations Coordinator at (815)791-8093 or via email to [braidwoodlionsclub@yahoo.com](mailto:braidwoodlionsclub@yahoo.com).

**Q:** I have submitted a donation along with my entry form to participate in the Summerfest parade, can I get a refund?

**A:** Yes you can. You can request a refund by contacting our Festival Operations Coordinator at (815)791-8093 or via email to [braidwoodlionsclub@yahoo.com](mailto:braidwoodlionsclub@yahoo.com).

**Q:** Is the club still getting charged for canceling any entertainment which has already been booked.

**A:** We will be working with the various entertainers that we have already booked for this year's festival to either automatically reschedule them for next year's festival or negotiate out a cancellation agreement. Many of the contracts that we have entered into provide a cancellation clause which will abide by if required.

**Q:** What are the dates for 2021 Summerfest?

**A:** The dates for 2021 will be July 15<sup>th</sup> thru July 18<sup>th</sup>. (Always the third full Thursday thru Sunday time period in July)

**Q:** Since the club will not be getting any income from the festival, will the club have to cut back on its expenses and other contributions throughout the year?

**A:** Undoubtedly yes. However, we will work to ensure that the funds which are vital to our club's mission remain intact. We are no stranger when it comes to cutting back. Since income from our 2019 Summerfest were greatly impacted by the extreme weather conditions (heat, humidity and rain) we had to look at where our funds needed to be spent and where we could cut back. This year will more than likely be the same but probably a little more intense.