

Rotary Bourbon Ball canceled

By Keith Lawrence
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The Owensboro Rotary Club's 13th annual Bourbon Ball was to have been on Feb. 13.

But it's been canceled — not by the double 13s, but by coronavirus.

Jeff Ebelhar, club treasurer, said that through the years the events have been “very successful, so successful that other organizations have copied them.”

He said attendance at what was first known as the Rotary Club's Bourbon Heritage Celebration has ranged from 200 to 400 people through the years.

Last year, Ebelhar said, “We raised approximately \$20,000.”

That money is returned to the community in a variety of ways, he said.

The breakdown includes \$10,000 for the Rotary Youth Fund Grant to the family resource centers in both local public school systems, \$10,000 in support of other community nonprofit organizations and \$3,500 to support the Honor Flight program which takes older veterans to see the monuments in Washington, D.C.

Ebelhar said the Honor Flights were also canceled this year by the pandemic.

“Last year's Bourbon Ball was one of the last public events before COVID,” he said.

The pandemic reached Owensboro a month later.

The Bourbon Ball is the club's biggest fundraiser of the year, Ebelhar said



Jeff Ebelhar

He said, "We're applying for a gaming license so we can have a 50/50 raffle. And we want to do a bourbon, wine and rye pull. Both of those will be in the first quarter."

But Ebelhar isn't expecting those events to bring in as much as the Bourbon Ball.

"It's hard to replace," he said.

So, Ebelhar said, "We reached out to our members. People have been really generous."

A letter to members asks for them to send donations to the Owensboro Rotary Club Foundation Inc.

Anyone who wants to help can send in a check payable to the Owensboro Rotary Club Foundation Inc.

It should be mailed to Owensboro Rotary Club Foundation, Attn: Jeff Ebelhar, PO Box 1824, Owensboro, KY 42302-1824.

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