



Katy Wild West Brew Fest

<https://www.wildwestbrewfest.com/>

About

The Wild West Brewfest is proudly hosted by the Katy Rotary Club of Texas. All net proceeds raised each year are given back to the Katy community, of which the Katy Rotary Club is a very big part.

Vision

The vision of the Brew Fest is to give back to the community; to reinvest in the community so that the community can thrive. Over the years, the Brew Fest has supported local schools (toy drives, artwork that teaches geography, growing future business leaders, etc.), the Katy Special Rodeo, and the Neuhaus Education Center, to name a few. Additionally, the Brew Fest supports both local and international Rotary projects, such as the Children of the Dump project in Nicaragua, and the Rotary Fire Fighters Home in Houston.

History

The idea for the Brew Fest started when in Breckenridge, Colorado over a decade ago. A Rotarian, David Loesch, biked into Breckenridge and stumbled on the Breckenridge Rotary Club Brew Fest. It was an amazing event, approximately four to five hundred people, roughly about 10 to 15 breweries occupying downtown main street.

At that time, David's club, the Katy Rotary club, only had one fundraiser, and that was the Katy Scholarship Triathlon. David realized that the Katy Rotary Club didn't have the opportunity to give to back to the community like the Breckenridge CO Rotary Club was doing, because everything that was earned from the scholarship triathlon was given to students. Providing student scholarships is good, but the club wanted to do more. David called the president of the Katy club at that time, Nick Schrader, to discuss what he had just witnessed. When he returned to Texas, he pitched it to his club. With surprisingly results, most of the older members in the club, even the aged members, 60 years, 70 years, and even 80 years old, were excited to hear about the event.

Three Rotarians at the time, Ralph Brock, Malcolm Junior, David Loesch and Nick Schrader took the helm and made it happen. And so, the idea of a Katy Wild West Brew Fest moved from being an idea to a reality. In the first year, the event was held at the Bellagio Town Center. The guys had no idea what they were doing, no idea how many people would show up and no idea how to manage the event, but that did not deter them.

They secured 10 to 15 brewers and to their amazement 1,700 people showed up. The success of the first brew fest enabled the Katy Rotary Club to give back approximately \$17,000 to the community. The following year they stayed with the Bellagio for their venue. That time, they had roughly 3,000 people, 33 brewers, about 65 taps and were able to give back approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000 to the community. And from there, it just continued to escalate. In year three, they had about 3,600 people and in year 4, they passed the 5,000-patron mark and raised over \$90,000. Eventually, they outgrew the Bellagio and moved to the Katy Mills Mall. The City of Katy became the largest partner, besides H-E-B and BB&T Bank.

The success was only due to the vision, the people working, the events, the Rotarians that committed and the hard work that was done to make the event the best it could possibly be and developing good teams and good friends along the way.

Today

2021 will be their 10th year, (having skipped year nine due to COVID). Their goal this year is to give back roughly \$170,000, which will put them over the \$1 million mark since inception! The 2021 monies will go Camp Hope, Katy Christian Ministries, FFA, scholarships for band students, buying band instruments for Katy ISD, helping FFA students buy their projects and a host of various things.

This event is now known around the country as the best beer event, and it not only brings people to the City of Katy, but it also raises awareness about Rotary. To date they average approximately 8,000 people per event., representing 17 to 20 states. The event continues to be recognized both nationally and on a global scale.

The Katy Brew Fest is the perfect example of how a dream can become a reality that touches lives around the globe. It is a combination of philanthropy, camaraderie, and the Texas spirit of supporting the community.