

BOWLING BUSINESS



Twelve Strike Celebrates 25 Years of Settling Scores

Those who use the Twelve Strike Scoring System in their lanes are confident that their patrons are getting a scoring system that utilizes the latest technology and has a 24/7 support system at the ready. The company, which makes all of its products in the USA, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this month.

The system was the brainchild of bowling business owner Rex Richmond. In the early '80s, Richmond was the owner of Crown Bowl in Long Beach, Calif. and was using a system called Discrete Scoring. It constantly broke down and replacement parts became unavailable, and Richmond knew that he could do better.

In 1989, Richmond unveiled a design for a scoring system with all the

attributes that make Twelve Strike so strong today — it's not proprietary-based, it's affordable to all and it offers immediate technical support when you call.

Sadly, Rex passed away in 2003, and Twelve Strike was left in the capable hands of his son Ron and his wife Susie.

"Ron was working with the company at the time, but we took over the responsibilities," Mrs. Richmond says. "Since we have taken over, we have brought the company out of the DOS dinosaur era and brought it into a Windows embattled system era."

"For the most part, we have stuck to our core principals," Mr. Richmond adds. "I think the system is a lot better now."

Even though the upgraded system uses Windows, Twelve Strike can still support DOS customers, even those with systems installed in the company's first year of operation.

"We still provide them with technical help and parts, plus 24/7 tech support," Mrs. Richmond says. "We have never sent that 'Dear John' letter saying that the system would no longer be supported. We try to work with everyone."

The company has changed since the next generation of Richmonds has taken over. Twelve Strike now runs a fabrication shop; not only do they supply the scoring system, but they also manufacture and build all their own pedestals, computer cases, brackets and any special items the customer may need — for example, a custom-designed wire case was recently made for a client.

"We used to rely on more outside suppliers for different hardware components, but that's made in-house

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"Aroma 300 from U.S. Polychemical brightens up the atmosphere. Our center has never smelled this good. And most importantly, our customers love the new smell, which is a unique change from everyday odors. This conditioner is far and above anything in an upgrade to oil. This should have been done many years ago."

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ANYTHING
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9. OHIO

A group of Dayton proprietors held their first BVL fundraiser this past Labor Day. These proprietors donated \$1 per every Open Play game bowled. The group raised \$3,680 and they've asked for the funds to be directed to the 'Wounded Warriors Project' in the Dayton area. They plan to make this BVL fundraiser an annual Memorial Day event.

10. ALABAMA/MISSISSIPPI

The ALMS BPA re-elected Anne Hash of Rivergate Bowling Lanes in Natchez, Miss. as its President for another two-year term. Also elected were Tommy Barberini of Oak Mountain Lanes in Pelham, Ala. as the Vice-President, Chuck Holbert of Spanish Trail Lanes in Gautier, Miss. as the Treasurer and Steve Lander of Bama Lanes in Prattville, Ala. as the Secretary. Congratulations to all!

now, so we can tailor that to our customers," Mr. Richmond, who is also a mason, says.

Of course, the true value of the company, Mr. Richmond says, is the staff's commitment to customer service. Plus, since the DOS days were completely different than what Windows is today, they can give more direct support to the customer.

"That's our biggest attribute," he says. "We deliver 24/7. If a call comes in after hours, our cells ring and we get an email. We tell all our customers to leave a message because we will get right back to them. It doesn't matter if it's one in the morning. We will call back within 10-15 minutes."

The Richmonds understand that in today's bowling center environment, not everyone can upgrade to the new system, and they pride themselves on being able to help the customers Twelve Strike has had since the first days.

"We are always looking for parts to keep these older centers going who don't have the ability to upgrade at this time," Mrs. Richmond says. "People are comfortable with their systems and stay with what they are comfortable with sometimes."

"We have no hidden agenda underneath it. We don't ostracize or make them feel bad for not doing upgrades," Mr. Richmond adds. "We don't build in components that will break and it's very durable. Our older systems are

11. PENNSYLVANIA

The Bowling Proprietors Association of Pennsylvania was pleased to welcome the Italian American Bocce Association to its membership this month. This was the ninth new center to join the association this year, putting to put the state at 135 member centers overall. Pennsylvania holds the #1 rank for most centers increased (9) in 2014 compared to all the other state associations.

12. FLORIDA

The BCAF has had 13 new centers join the association in 2014. That is the most new centers in 2014 compared to all the other state associations.

The next BCAF Board of Directors meeting will take place at the Sheraton Ft. Lauderdale Airport & Cruise Port Hotel, Dania, Fla. on January 27 & 28.

like a Timex watch — they keep on ticking."

With several hundred customers worldwide, the company's success is a direct result of Rex's unwavering commitment to his customers.

"Our business continues to grow," Mr. Richmond says. "We have more than 300 centers now and we are excited about where we can go."

As for its future, Mrs. Richmond believes someday, bowling centers will utilize tablets or iPads for customers as a scoring mechanism, eliminating the need for equipment and the company is researching how to get into that part of the business.

"Our thing is to keep the bottom dollar as low as possible for the customer, so whatever way we can help do that and still provide them with all the functions that they require for a scoring system," she says. "Those are the avenues we are looking to."

Mr. Richmond is optimistic that the next 25 years will be just as successful as the previous ones.

"I think what the next 25 years will show is quite a bit of development underneath a Windows platform and giving the customers the satisfaction, plus bells and whistles they expect," he says. "Plus, to continually not obsolete the customers as we continue through the year, our system will always allow our customers to grow with us without having to spend large money on hardware."