Hello, Members!

This is the second in a series of postings intended to raise awareness among the members of what it takes to run a facility of the quality of BRSP. The series is intended to answer the often-asked question:” Where does all the money go?” The full series will be posted at <https://brspclub.com/news/>

In order to make the numbers meaningful, I include a number for what it costs each and every one of our roughly 2400 members. By the time I publish the final article, you should know 1) That I keep track of where every penny is going and 2) how all those little pennies add up. Another takeaway is that if these costs are spread among more members, the burden on each membership will be less. We are ramping up a membership drive, but our best recruiters are **YOU**. Be looking for people who might make good members and tout the benefits to them. Better yet, bring them out to shoot!

For our second installment, we will examine the biggest single expenditure in our budget: Labor.

I do a deep dive into the topic, so here is its summary in case you don’t want to read any further: labor is **expensive**, the labor market is **competitive** and **inflationary**, and the cost of labor includes things you might not have thought of. Roughly $338 of your membership, or 86%, goes to paying for the labor that runs the park and makes your experience better. Some of this cost is paid by the people shooting events (in the form of registration fees), but only a fraction.

The deep dive:

* Administrative labor
  + This is labor to keep the park open and running. It includes the cashiers, the range safety officers (only when doing their core duties), the management staff, events coordinator, and the maintenance of grounds and facilities (not including everything from the firing lines/bullrail downrange) Last year, we made a concerted effort to increase the efficiency of this staff, and managed to spend just 88% of the budgeted amount, or $382,545. This is $159.40 from each of our 2400 members, or 40.5% of your membership dollars. The tight labor market is forcing raises this coming year of about $1 per hour for every employee (about 6.6% for the typical employee), which may sound insignificant, but amounts to an estimated additional $25,500 for the year, for this line item alone.
* Shotgun labor
  + This is labor directly related to shotgun fields and events, including filling machines with clays, setting fields, and the maintenance of trap, skeet and walkthrough “beyond the bullrail”. Some of this labor is billed to the events thrown, as well as absorbed in the cost of recreational birds, but not all of it. As with admin labor, we were able to be more efficient, spending only 87% of the budgeted labor, which was $159,395. This is $66.41 from each member, or 16.9% of your membership dollars. Again, inflation is forcing raises for these workers, which will add roughly $10,800 in the coming year.
* Rifle/Pistol labor
  + This is labor directly related to the rifle/pistol ranges and events, from the firing lines on downrange, including setting up and tearing down stages running events, maintaining the shelters, benches, and berms, and performing maintenance on targets and props. As with Shotgun, above some of this labor is billed to the individual events, but by its nature, not all can be. Last year, we spent more than the budgeted amount for this labor, but we also threw 34% more events that the previous year. R/P labor amounted to $160,240, or $66.44 from each member (16.9%). This is another area that will be hit by inflation-related raises, for about $11,000 dollars. We have another big increase in number of events thrown, as well.
* Payroll Taxes
  + Everyone who draws a paycheck knows that you pay taxes to the government on your earnings. But did you know that the employer has an additional tax burden? For us, last year, we gave the government $63,622. That is $26.51 from each of our members, or 6.7% of your membership. This number will also rise as our overall payroll increases.
* Worker’s compensation expense
  + This figure is driven by the cost of workers’ comp insurance, as well as by the actual expense of any actual injury. Total expected cost for the year is $9600, or $4.00 per member.
* Health insurance
  + The cost of health insurance is split between the employee and the employer. We have managed to get a very good deal through membership in a cooperative industry organization, but the employer portion of insurance is expected to be $38,400, which is a 12% increase over last year (health care costs are a major driver of inflation for us all). This is $16 from each member, or 4% of your membership dollars.

As you can see, labor is far and away the biggest expense on the park. It is also the one most sensitive to inflation. All you need to do is drive down the main drag of Eagle River, and you will see big signs offering $16 per hour for cozy indoor burger-flipping jobs. Our employees work in the cold, snow, wind, and rain for one to two dollars less than that. Luckily, they are very dedicated to the shooting sports, but we still have to compensate them fairly, and it is becoming more expensive to do so.

Another piece of the money puzzle for labor is the cost of NOT retaining employees. I spoke with a Human Resources Professional who works for one of Alaska’s largest employers (who is one of our members), who told me a study was conducted late last year that showed there are only 0.51 potential employees for every job opening in Alaska. No, that wasn’t a typo… there are twice as many jobs as people to fill them.

Finding and keeping quality employees is going to continue to be the most expensive part of keeping our club operating.

Next up in our “Where does all the money go?” series: Cost of Goods. Look for it next week.