

July 22, 2018

The Demise of the PVSA Long-running Gun & Sportsman's Show

The DuPage County Fair Association Board has refused to negotiate with the Pioneer Valley Sportsman's Association (PVSA) to allow all legal firearms and accessories to be sold at the gun and sportsman's shows that PVSA has hosted at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, IL for approximately 50 years. Because these restrictions violate the ability of many of the show's vendors to engage in lawful and legal free trade of legal firearms and accessories, and discriminate against these law-abiding vendors and the thousands of law-abiding firearm enthusiast guests who have attended the PVSA shows for about 50 years, PVSA has made the very difficult decision to discontinue holding gun shows at the DuPage County Fairground rather than concede to the restrictions on sales of certain legal firearms and accessories demanded by the DuPage County Fair Association Board.

PVSA has hosted a monthly (October through April) gun and sportsman's show for approximately fifty years at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, IL. PVSA has always required the vendors to not only follow all laws of the State of Illinois and the Federal Government regarding firearm sales, but also had additional safety measures in place to ensure that every show was always a safe, family friendly, and enjoyable event for everyone. These additional safety measures included: for the past several years, PVSA has paid to have at least one officer from the Wheaton Police Department present for the entire show, patrolling among the guests and vendors; and during the last shows of 2018, PVSA had representatives from the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) in attendance.

The initial restrictions requested by the DuPage County Fair Association Board began in November 2017, when the Fairgrounds Manager requested that the word "gun" be deleted from PVSA Show promotional items, including signage. PVSA complied with this request.

In February 2018, the Fairgrounds Executive Manager requested a meeting with the PVSA Board of Directors, which occurred on Thursday, February 22, 2018. Out of respect for the victims of the school shooting tragedy in Florida, and respect to the Fair Association Board's request and PVSA's long-standing collegial relationship with the Fair Association Board, PVSA voluntarily agreed to temporarily interrupt the sale of certain legal items that the Fairgrounds Executive Manager requested on behalf of Fair Association Board, specifically for PVSA's last two shows of spring 2018. These items included "AR-type" rifles and "bump stocks". It is important to note that PVSA has always strictly prohibited the sale of any and all illegal items of any type at our show and that our safety record has been excellent, as we closely monitor each show from beginning to end. In addition, the PVSA Sportsman's Shows have fostered a family-friendly environment, with many parents and children attending, which fits with the "family friendly" environment that the DuPage County Fairgrounds strives to represent. The PVSA Sportsman's Shows provide a valuable opportunity for guests, including local residents, to participate in an enjoyable, safe, and legal activity.

Unfortunately, during discussions for renewal of the lease between the Fair Association and PVSA, the Fair Association Board demanded that the "temporary" restrictions be permanent, and added additional restrictions, including prohibiting the sale of any firearm magazine capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition, which would result in the prohibition of the sale of many legal manufacturer-standard semi-automatic handguns. The Fair Association Board refused to negotiate with the PVSA Board about these restrictions on the sale of legal firearms and accessories.

There were several meetings of the PVSA Board and Membership discussing if PVSA could accept terms of a lease that restrict any item that may be legally sold to the public in the State of Illinois. It was a very difficult decision by the PVSA Membership and Board of Directors to decline renewal of the restrictive lease.

PVSA has been actively searching for a facility in a location that would provide the necessary accommodations, including appropriate access and parking, and the freedom to allow vendors to sell legal items in accordance with all laws of the State of Illinois and Federal Government.

PVSA asks for your support. Please contact the DuPage County Fair Association via email and Facebook to express your displeasure of their discriminatory stance against law-abiding firearm owners and shooting sports enthusiasts.

The DuPage County Fair Association Executive Manager's Email address is: Jim@dupagecountyfair.org

The DuPage County Fair Association's email address: info@dupagecountyfair.org

The link to the DuPage County Fair's Facebook page: <https://m.facebook.com/DuPageCountyFair/>