

2016 Hilltown Brewfest Fundraiser Canceled

Rick Oliver, owner of The New Salem General Store, the driving force behind the annual Hilltown Brewfest fundraiser, has announced that the festival fundraiser will not be held this year. Yes, sadly New Salem will be a less “hoppy” place this September as there will be no sampling of craft brews, local wines, live music and raffles to support our local fire departments and organizations. “It was not an easy decision” states Rick, “our team was very invested in the event and the ability to give back to our community. We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish and would like to thank the community for their support over the last eight years.”

The Hilltown Brewfest, an annual event run by Oliver and a team of volunteers, was in the early stages of planning for its 9th annual event when word was received that the beer distributors would no longer be allowed to donate beer to beer fests. Beer could be purchased for the festival, but the Hilltown Brewfest has always received donations of beer, wine and spirits with the proceeds of the event being donated to local fire departments. The profits that could be generated if buying beer instead of through donations would be greatly diminished - if able to be recognized at all. As such, the hard decision was made to cancel this years' event. Oliver and the long term Brew Crew team of volunteers are saddened to see the event come to an end. All agree the planning and need to make it better each year was as much fun as the event itself.

In the 8 years that the Hilltown Brewfest was run, it grew to be a well-attended favorite event of local residents and beer-lovers from across the State. Attendance had typically been 800 - 1000 people annually, with people attending rain or shine. Over the last eight years' profits of approximately \$70,000 has been raised through Hilltown Brewfest revenues and associated 50/50 raffles. These funds have been donated to local organizations including the New Salem Fire Department Association, Wendell Fire Department, Shutesbury Fire Department, Petersham Fire Department, Northfield Dive Team, the Petersham Lions Club, the Central Mass Steam Gas and Machine Association, the Wendell Meeting House and the 1794 Meeting House.