

Welcome to the Shooters Corner. Vol. II

Well it has been a month already. If you remember from last month's issue I told you I would go over the current state of the club and look into the future.

At last check we have 633 members. I believe this should make us one of the largest clubs in Arkansas. As you know, the dues for this year were increased from \$60.00 to \$75.00. I personally think this is a great deal for everything we have to offer. If the club were to perform a poll you would find that our membership spans from doctors, lawyers, engineers, factory workers, construction workers and just about any trade you can think of. Of these you will find that some use the range from one to two times a year to sight in their deer rifles to those that use the range a few times a week and compete in multiple club matches as well as competing in state and national level matches. With the increase in dues, we did have a small percentage of members that did not renew their membership for 2008. However we experience this every year, and in the past we have always made up for it throughout the year with new members. The start of 2008 is looking great and the increase in dues has not slowed down the number of requests to join the club. In January alone we had over 30 prospective members fill out applications and join the club and in February we had over 20. So, all in all, I do believe we are headed in the right direction for our membership dues.

We were able to get a lot of work completed last year. And with the extra proceeds from the dues increasing we should be able to get a lot more completed this year. The contractor the club hired to complete the dirt work on Range 1 started moving dirt on November 17th. This work was to expand Range 1 from a maximum distance of 300 yards to 600 yards and build new impact berms at 200, 300, 400 and 500 meters. As of this writing, all of the major dirt work for this range is complete and it is now open for business even though there is still some other work to be performed. Keep in mind that this range will need to be closed from time to time to finish the remaining work. We will send out notice in the newsletter and on the club website at www.bentongunclub.org. We are still waiting on request for bids to get the construction for the new shed started. I hope we can have all of them back this month and get the contractor started sometime in February. With any luck we can have the shed up and finished sometime in April, maybe sooner depending on the weather. Once the shed is finished the last remaining item that will need to be completed is the placing of the rails for the silhouette animals to sit on at 200, 300, 400 and 500 meters. This will take some time complete but the labor will be performed by volunteers from the club. This being said, if you would like to volunteer please contact me and I can get you in touch with the right person. When the rails are in place all of the budgeted items that were voted on last year for this range will be complete.

With all the work that has been and will be completed this year, there is still more to do on this range. With the current layout of this range it will primarily be used for shooting High Power Silhouette matches. There is also a strong interest in holding Prone Center Fire Matches and Cross the Course Matches. In order to hold these matches we would have to construct what is known as a "PIT" area with retractable target boards. This

would allow the shooters of these matches to see where their rounds are impacting the targets when they are shooting at 600 yards. We are in the process of getting plans drawn up for this and getting them out to quote so that an estimated cost can be presented to the membership some time this year and hopefully voted on and approved to start construction at the beginning of next year.

With the rise in membership there has also been a rise in range use. One of the ways we want to make more room for the average member is to add a new plinking range. This range would sit on the left side of range 4 and would provide 24' of target board at 10 and 25 yards and 16' of target board @ 50 yards. We would construct an 80' shed to shoot under and a new berm would be constructed that would run between the new shed and the existing shed on range 4. The berm would run down to the 10 yard target board then cut back to the left running behind the 25 and then 50 yard target berm and terminate into the existing berm. This would split range 4 up into two separate ranges. The first would be called Range 4A The Short Plinking Range and the second would be called Range 4B The Rifle Range. Once construction on this range is completed we would then remove the 10 and 25 yard target boards on the existing plinking range (to be renamed Range 3 The Long Plinking Range) and place more target boards @ 50, 100 and 200 yards. This would double the amount of dedicated range space for our plinkers in the club. We have the plans drawn up for this and plan on getting quotes for the dirt work and for the construction of the shed out as soon as possible. I would love to be able to make the first motion to secure funds for this project at the February meeting and get this project started around April and maybe finished sometime in June or July.

Looking into the future there are a few items I would like to go over and get the membership thinking about. In the next 4 to 5 years I would like to see the road from the gate down to each range be paved with asphalt. The road would be 14 feet wide and at each range we would have a paved parking lot. At the same time this work is being performed we would also work on drainage through out the whole range. We also need to start working on this next item right now for this will have to involve the county and will take a few years to get anything done. We need to start calling and e-mailing the Saline County Judge and working on him and his office to make plans to pave Mt Olive Cut Off from Mt Olive Road to our gate.

In the next 5 to 10 years I would like to see the club start working on its own club house. The next time you are the range when you start to go down the big hill look over to your right. I think this would be a great spot to have a club house with power and running water. We could start holding our monthly meetings on our own land and stop having to pay to rent a spot to hold them. We could also rent this space out to members to use for family gatherings and such. I would also like to have electricity to every range along with running water. One other item I would like to see happen is to have a men's and women's restrooms installed where the existing portable toilets are now. I know some will read this and think that this is a far cry but just think about the following. In the next few years we should have all the major range construction complete on the whole range. We should by then have a yearly maintenance budget in place to make sure that all the construction that has taken place is kept up and in a good working order at all times. This

would then allow a majority of our dues proceeds to be used to fund these other types of projects.

I truly believe this is a sound plan for the next few years and will keep the club growing and heading in the right direction. When all of these projects are complete we will have the best range in Central Arkansas, if not the whole state.

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