

NEWS

[return to previous page](#)**Racers Upset About Big Bend Race Cancellation 2/22/08**

Eddie Garcia
CBS 7 News
February 22, 2008

Fort Stockton, Texas - The future of the Big Bend Open road race is still uncertain and many race enthusiasts are left in disappointment.

"Everybody wants to drive fast and not worry about getting a ticket."

It's the exhilaration of the Big Bend race that attracts Scott Sparkman.

The news of it's cancellation hit him hard.

"I was crushed I was really looking forward to it, I know my wife was looking forward to it," Sparkman said.

Sparkman's not alone racers from all over the nation look forward to the event.

Mike Powers of Alpine said: "Most of the racers are just devastated by it."

Powers has been a part of the race since the beginning, he says some have already spent a lot in preparations.

People like Sparkman.

"My entry fee was around \$600 and that's just to enter the racem," Sparkman said.

That's not even counting lodging, food and travel.

Powers said: "The racers are losing an awful lot of money. Nothing compared to what the two communities are going to lose."

Many racers want to know what went wrong.

The problem is no one will go on record to explain.

"I think it's probably a problem between people that could be worked out," Sparkman said.

Now a special committee in Ft. Stockton is trying to do just that and get the race back on track.

"If the race could be salvaged, I'd love to see it, I'd love to participate in it," Powers said.

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CBS 7 News
February 21, 2007

Sanderson, Texas - The Fort Stockton Convention of Visitors Bureau met with Race board members today to try to find a way to salvage the race
The salvage operation is simple.

Big Bend Race Board Chairman Leo Smith said: "Try to plan to roll this race if possible to the October race in place of the Road Runner race."
Ft. Stockton Mayor Ruben Falcon said: "The city of Ft. Stockton, we want this to happen."

Smith of Sanderson says before that can happen they need to get race organizers back on board.
"We had some people resign, the safety crew," Smith said.

Smith says he and Fort Stockton officials agreed today to form a committee whose job will be to make the race possible again.

Smith said: "The ball is in the city's court."

Mayor Ruben Falcon says he's confident it will work.

"Once they see that this is for real that this community really wants this race to take place I think they will go back on," Falcon said.

Smith in Sanderson says he welcomes a peaceful resolution.

"Once that plan is together, Terrell County has to agree to it and Pecos County, Ft. Stockton and TXDot and hopefully we can make it happen," Smith said.

Many race participants from all over the county contacted CBS 7 and said they hope this salvage operation works.

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NEWS

[return to previous page](#)**Big Bend Open Road Race Cancelled 2/20/08**

Eddie Garcia
CBS 7 News
February 20, 2008

Fort Stockton, Texas
- The Big Bend open road race in Fort Stockton has been canceled indefinitely.

Board chairman Judge Leo Smith tells CBS 7 one of the factors that caused the cancellation is an online panic from race participants expressing concern about the race's safety



He says the blogs posted on the organization's website caused the official safety crew to become concerned about liability and they resigned.

That caused the organization to lose their TX-DOT license, which allows them to shut down the highway for the race.

City leaders say the race brings more than half a million dollars into the economy when the race comes to town now that it's canceled they say the impact will be felt in a big way.

Mayor Ruben Falcon said: "This is extremely disappointing to the city."

Falcon says the race's cancellation is a major blow to the City of Fort Stockton.

"The restaurant the hotels the gas stations any of the local grocers, everybody benefits from them being here," he said.

Not just business benefited, the organization also donated to many charitable causes.

Big Bend Road Race board member Tony Villarreal said: "We have an endowment at Sul Ross, the EMS, the fire department and several other community organizations benefit from it as well."

Many fans and participants are disappointed about the cancellation.

"It brings in people from all over the United States."

People with money and they spend even at the most unlikely places. Marissa Valenzuela Owner of Ambiance Salon says she generates 6 times what she normally does when the race is in town.

"A lot of the people have time to kill and you know they go eat, they stay here, they go shopping, it's going to make a big difference," she said.

A big difference the entire community will feel.

Tony Villarreal said: "It's a very sad day for this to happen."

We asked board members if the race could be moved to another West Texas community, they said that is a definite possibility.

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