

# Bricktown Events Center closes in pandemic fallout

By **Brandy McDonnell**  
Features Writer  
bmcdonnell@oklahoman.com

The Bricktown Events Center is closing indefinitely in the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

The venerable venue has hosted numerous events over the years, from rock concerts and charitable galas to political rallies and watch parties. After two decades in business, Brent Brewer said making Saturday's announcement was difficult.

"It is hard. It's been 20 years. I built it myself. I don't know really what to say. These times, they're just tough, and we're not going to be able to really overcome them. ... This is the decision that I made this week on what was best for me, my family and the business," Brewer, owner of Brewer Entertainment and the Bricktown Events Center, told The Oklahoman.

"We decided that we needed to pretty much shut down and get with some of the clients that are still wanting to do events in the fall and in the Christmas season (and give them) a chance to find another place and work with them so we can move forward on a more sustainable

concept for the facility."

The closure was made public Saturday on the venue's Facebook page.

"Due to the shutdown by The Mayor caused by the COVID-19 virus we have made the tough decision to close the Bricktown Events Center indefinitely. Thank you to OKC for a great 20 years!" stated the Facebook announcement.

## Lingering effects

Mayor David Holt's shelter-in-place order closing nonessential businesses expired May 1, and restrictions have been eased in phases since. His new emergency proclamation for OKC's COVID-19 response goes into effect Monday; it simply encourages businesses, including event and concert venues, to follow Centers for Disease Control and Oklahoma City-County Health Department guidelines.

"Obviously, we're all well aware that nobody is really having events or concerts. But at this point, that's a private sector decision, as of May 15 when gathering limitations were lifted. Even the staggered seat rules

that we had for theater-style seating were lifted on Friday," Holt said.

"I'm sad for all of the effects of the pandemic ... among them what our reticence as a society to gather is going to have on concert venues and event centers.

"Even though government orders are no longer in place, there's obviously still a lot of concern about the virus that is causing major ramifications in those industries. I hope that we can continue to make progress and build the testing and tracing infrastructure that eventually makes people feel safe enough to do those types of activities again and that industry can hopefully recover in the long term."

Brewer said he furloughed the venue's small full-time staff in March, but with the indefinite closure, it has now been laid off.

"That wasn't the decision we ultimately wanted to have, but here we are," he said. "It's the virus, the shutdown. ... It's the whole current situation that we're in and how it's affecting the hospitality industry. I don't want to point fingers at any one thing or another. But I think this whole situation has really crippled the hospitality industry."

## CORONAVIRUS IN OKLAHOMA

From staff reports

**Deaths** 334  
**Total recovered** 5,435

The number of positive COVID-19 tests in Oklahoma increased by 80 to 6,418 on Saturday, while the number of deaths related to the coronavirus moved to 334, an increase of five.

Here is a look at the latest numbers in Oklahoma and across the nation:

**OKLAHOMA**  
**Positive** 6,418

**UNITED STATES**  
**Total** 1,760,740  
**Deaths** 103,472

## STIMULUS CHECKS

Want to see when your stimulus check might arrive? Go to [irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment](https://irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment) and fill out the form to find out when your check will be processed.

## Ongoing uncertainty

The Bricktown Events Center offers a standing-room capacity of about 1,800, theater seating for 1,100 attendees or banquet seating for 650 people.

"When the first announcement came out that we were going to shut down, we had many events call, cancel, reschedule. And in the event and hospitality business, we don't know when it's going to come back," Brewer said.

"It's hard to keep a facility of this size sustainable until we have those answers and know that there's going to be a consistent event schedule and income stream to support it."

He said he doesn't know yet if he will try to sell the facility.

"We'll just see whatever options or opportunities are out there as they come," he said. "If things change, then we might reconsider, I guess. But as of now, we need to kind of shut the doors and regroup."

## SURVIVING CORONAVIRUS

# Back from 'death's door'

**Pauls Valley man battles COVID-19 for 30 days**

By **Jordan Green**  
Staff writer

A nurse walked into Jed Jarvis' room at the University of Oklahoma Medical Center on March 20. She wanted Jed to do a video chat with his family.

"She wanted him to talk to the boys in case he didn't make it," said Tammy Jarvis, Jed's wife. "I don't think he realized that he was about to be intubated within a few hours."

Jed, 53, told his two young sons that he loves them and asked them to take care of their mother.

Then he hung up. It would be the last time he'd see his family face-to-face for more than 30 days.

He spent those days fighting for his life in a battle against the coronavirus COVID-19.

## Hallucinations

No one in Garvin County had been diagnosed with the coronavirus when the Pauls Valley residents tested positive for COVID-19 in March. Both said they started feeling sick on March 11. Tammy, 52, had a cough and a headache, but she didn't have a fever. Jed, however, had a cough, a headache, and a fever of 104 degrees.

Jed tested negative for the flu on March 13. He took a test for the coronavirus three days later and received the results March 19. As soon as his results came in, he and his wife left their Pauls Valley home and drove to the University of Oklahoma Medical Center in Oklahoma City. He was admitted and Tammy returned home. A day later, test results showed she, too, had the virus.

The Jarvises still do not know how they contracted the virus. They said they hardly go anywhere and hadn't traveled outside of Oklahoma.

Jed doesn't remember much from March 11 to March 19. He remembers even less from his first two to three weeks in the hospital, he said.

But he remembers the hallucinations. When a nurse walked into his room in the intensive care unit, he saw some of his closest friends there. At least he thought he did.

"There are bits and pieces that I remember in there," he said. "Most of the time, I hallucinated. ... The hallucinations were mixed with reality. I would be talking to my nurse, and I would see people standing on either side of her that were my friends. I would say, 'My friend is standing right there, and his daughter is standing right there.' And she would say, 'There's nobody here with me.'"

To help improve his

breathing, a team of seven doctors repeatedly rolled Jed over onto his stomach. He would lie in the prone position for up to 18 hours for several days. Access to his intensive care unit room was restricted. He could only see out of his room through glass doors and a small window used by doctors who were observing him.

The novel coronavirus was still relatively new in Oklahoma at the time. The state's first case was reported March 7, and fewer than five cases had been reported by the time Jed was admitted to the hospital. But doctors across the nation already were conducting tests to see which medications, if any, worked to suppress symptoms of the virus.

And Jed was a specimen in those tests. He was given a trial drug called Remdesivir for 10 days starting March 27. It's an antiviral drug that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved for emergency use on coronavirus patients.

Doctors also prescribed Tocilizumab, a drug designed to reduce inflammation caused by the virus. Luckily for Jed, his fever decreased four hours after taking the first dose of that drug. It stayed down for seven days.

But no matter what medications doctors tried, nothing could keep him off of a ventilator.

When doctors intubated him March 21, Jed ran the risk of becoming an unfavorable statistic. Coronavirus patients had a low rate of survival once they were put on ventilators.

"At the time, if they were being intubated, it was a 13% chance of survivability," he said.

That's why he had the video chat with his sons the first time he learned he would be intubated. When he hung up, he sent a text message to his wife.

"There is a chance that this is the end, correct?"

## On again, off again

Tammy refused to believe Jed's life would end. And she was right. Two hours after being intubated, medical staffers called to tell her that Jed had been intubated successfully. They said he was "comfortable."

He was taken off of the ventilator April 10. Things were looking up. The next day, however, his hallucinations worsened, and he was reintubated two days later on Easter Sunday.

He came off the ventilator again April 14. Just hours later, he was put back on it.

But on April 16, he was taken off of the ventilator for the last time.

Jed said one of the most important part of his treatment was receiving blood plasma from someone of his blood type who had already recovered

from the coronavirus. Called "convalescent plasma," it contained antibodies he needed to help his immune system ward off the virus.

On April 19, one month after he was admitted to the hospital, Jed was moved to a step-down unit. And on April 22, he was moved to a rehabilitation hospital. His battle wasn't over, but he had started to regain consciousness.

## Controversial drug

While Jed battled the virus, Tammy's health improved a couple of weeks after she contracted the virus.

A family medicine physician who practices in Pauls Valley, Tammy said she was in pain after she developed symptoms but initially didn't realize how sick she was.

"I just had this cough that wouldn't stop, and literally my head hurt so bad, I would have to hold my head when I coughed," she said. "I didn't honestly realize how sick I was until after I took him to the hospital, and friends stepped in and said, 'You need to sit down and let people do for you.' They were offering to bring meals to the door and all that stuff, and I was like, 'I've got plenty of food here.'"

Tammy's friends insisted that she check her pulse daily.

"They were like, 'You are sick. You don't realize how sick you are.' They were calling me every day wanting to know what my pulse was, and once they made me start doing that, I was actually pretty concerned that, if things didn't turn around pretty quickly, I would wind up in a bed next to him."

She started feeling better after about nine days and believes taking hydroxychloroquine was the key to improving her health.

Hydroxychloroquine has been used to treat malaria since World War II and, in recent weeks, President Donald Trump has touted the drug as an effective treatment for the coronavirus. Some health officials have said the drug has no proven effects in treating the virus, however.

Dr. Tony Fauci, Trump's leading infectious disease effort, told CNN on Wednesday that the drug has a "lack of efficacy."

But Tammy's physician prescribed the drug and within hours of taking it, she felt a difference, she said.

"The cough quieted down quite a bit, my shortness of breath wasn't as bad, and when I was getting close to that 10 hours — almost time to take the next dose at the 12 hour mark — I would start getting a little more short of



**Jed Jarvis shows a photo taken of himself while he battled the coronavirus at the University of Oklahoma Medical Center. Jarvis was hospitalized for 33 days beginning March 19.** [JORDAN GREEN/THE OKLAHOMAN]

breath again, and the cough would get worse," she said.

Tammy said she felt better after taking the drug for five days. She's donated her plasma twice since recovering from the virus.

Some medical providers say the drug shouldn't be taken outside of a hospital setting. But at the time she came down with the virus, getting into a hospital was difficult, she said.

"You can't get in a hospital setting unless you're sick enough to be in the hospital," Tammy said. "And if you're told to stay home in quarantine, what else are you supposed to do for yourself? ... If something happens to me, who is going to take care of my kids?"

While the drug may have some side effects, Jed said, it may be worth trying when prescribed appropriately.

"They're saying, 'Well, it can cause all these horrible heart problems.' Maybe so, but it's not as bad as dying," he said.

## At death's door

As Jed regained consciousness, he started asking doctors and nurses how bad his condition had become.

"It's safe to say I nearly died," he said. "When I was in MICU — and I'm saying this in the nicest way possible, because they are wonderful people — my nurses were like cheerleaders. They were like, 'Yes, you're doing great.' And if I would ask them a direct question about, 'So, how was I?' They would dance around it. They would not answer my questions. It was all really vague or just a non-answer."

He later found out that when nurses came on shift, they would go to his room before even walking to the break room to see if he was still alive.

He wept as he recalled his doctor's words about how grave his situation had become.

"I said, 'How bad was I?' And he said, 'I have never seen anybody get as far down as you did and come back as far as you have. You were at death's door.'"

## A new world

When Jed was released from the rehabilitation hospital May 2, his wife drove him home on Interstate 35.

Jed hadn't seen the outside world for more than a month. When he was admitted to the hospital, restaurants, bars, and movie theaters were still open. The grass hadn't even started growing.

"He was like, 'Have the boys started playing baseball yet?' I said, 'Honey, baseball season is canceled. You can't go to the movies right now, you can't do anything,'" Tammy said.

"It was a different world when I woke up," Jed said. "For 33 days, I was in a glass case. I had minimal human contact because of personal protective equipment restrictions. They were only allowed in there to give medication or unless there was an emergency. They couldn't just come in there and console you or make you feel better. ... The only contact you have with people, all you see is three inches from the bridge of their nose to their eyebrows. That's it. You don't know what these people look like. They do a wonderful job, but they have a lot to do."

## Changed perspective

Jed's fight to restore his health isn't over. His body was changed by the virus: He lost 45 pounds while in the hospital. And something else changed — his outlook on life.

"It changes your whole perspective," he said. "This is going to sound so cliché, but it changes your priorities. The things that you took for granted move up on your list. The importance of letting the people you're closest to know that you love them becomes infinitely important."

"And it drew me closer to God. I don't want to say that I ever really strayed far, but I realized how I've inched away and taken things for granted in my relationship with God, and how desperately I needed to rely on Him."