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Bowling

## Casper bowling alley closes its doors

GM says Eagle Bowl needs repairs to continue

By TOM DIXON Star-Tribune staff writer

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**T**he pin setters at Eagle Bowl & Café are being held together by duct tape, bungee cords and cardboard.

General manager Brandon Fiscus said he has all 10 lanes operating right now, but it's a matter of time until they start breaking down, and he doesn't have the parts to fix them.

"It's been neglected for a long, long time," Fiscus said.

After 60 years in business, Fiscus said Eagle Bowl has closed.

He said he has been pushing the owner of the building, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, to invest in the equipment for the last two years. He placed the blame for the machines' state of disrepair squarely on the lodge's shoulders.

"They just dragged their feet too long," Fiscus said. "They've had ample opportunity to do what they needed to do."

Lodge trustees declined to comment before their Tuesday night meeting, which was held after the Star-Tribune's deadline.

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Even if members decide to spend the money necessary for parts and repairs, Fiscus said it's too late.

“Leagues are about to start; we will have no time to do any of it,” Fiscus said. “We had all these leagues coming back, and I had to call them all and say, ‘We just can’t do it.’”

The Tuesday night summer league was expected to cap its season with a night of awards, prizes, food and a few games.

“It’s kind of weird that it’s closing, for as long as it’s been there,” said Connie Fitzgerald, secretary/treasurer of the league. “I always looked forward to going down there to bowl and knowing you’re going to have a good time.”

Fitzgerald has been playing at Eagle Bowl off and on for seven or eight years. She said she enjoyed the smaller environment, the close-knit community and the good food.

Fitzgerald credited Fiscus as one of the people who turned around the alley’s reputation and brought her back to Eagle Bowl.

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“(League members) are all kind of surprised, amazed, upset. Nothing good,” Fitzgerald said. “I think it’s a bad idea. It’s too bad the lodge doesn’t come up with the money to fix it and keep it running.”

Her league will be the last bowlers to play at the alley, regardless of the results of Tuesday night’s meeting, Fiscus said.

“I’m going to let them all know it’s done,” Fiscus said. “Unless they know someone else who can take it over.”

That’s not likely, he added.

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The vendors still need to pick up equipment, but Fiscus said he has already started moving out. Tuesday afternoon he stared out at the empty lanes, thinking back on 13 years of memories at the alley.

He joined a league when he first moved to Casper. Teams came and went, but Fiscus stayed. He eventually hired on as a mechanic nine years ago. He ran the alley for about a year from 2012 to 2013.

“I’ve had great times down here. Like I said, I loved all the customers,” Fiscus said. “I hate to see it go down, but it’s out of my control.”

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