

Beloved Navy Pier Closes

Posted At : November 22, 2020 7:58 PM | Posted By : SHSJC

Related Categories: Student Articles

By Brooklyn Young

(JAC 210 assignment for Prof. Waltz)

After losing \$20 million since the COVID-19 outbreak, the Chicago Navy Pier closed its doors on Labor Day. The beloved lakefront attraction, created in 1959, normally has nearly 9 million visitors per year.

The Pier is facing a staggering 20% decrease in visitors. The financial burden that the Pier and over 70 businesses there are facing is striking, as a result of these numbers.

"My students love the Shakespeare Theater. I am in just disbelief to see that I will not get to expose them to my favorite theater in Chicago. This is pretty selfish, but I hope that this will lead to a stronger comeback for the Pier," said CPS teacher, Sloan Greco.

During the beginning of the pandemic, Navy Pier closed their doors from March 16 through June 10. Getting their numbers back since then has been the biggest challenge. Enacting safety measures and having their numbers up to par was a tough battle. Only certain parts of the Pier have been re-opened, causing more visitors to stay away.

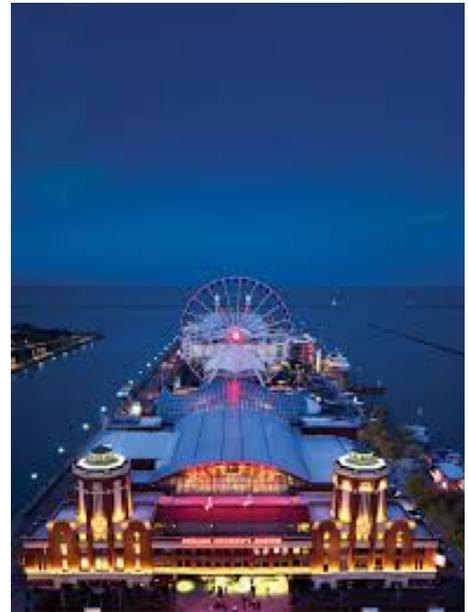
Travel restrictions have also reduced the number of visitors, who make up 40% of clientele.

Navy Pier holds more than 50-acres of land, with numerous restaurants, the infamous Centennial Wheel, Chicago's Children's Museum, Shakespeare Theater, Winter Wonderland, ice skating, water taxi rides, tour boats, shops, cruises, and more adventures. Navy Pier is a treasured attraction to so many Chicago natives and visitors.

Navy Pier also hosts festivals, movie nights on the lawn, seasonal celebrations, signature events, and provides a place for 2,000+ artists and over 80 cultural partners. They also host special events like weddings. The true harlequin of attractions is the "Raq."

In an attempt to keep these businesses going, the Pier has also provided rent-relief resulting in more revenue losses for the nonprofit, which depends solely on support from financial contributors, since 2011.

"Well, we have been through this once before and we have prepared for it as much as possible, but it will be hard. Most of our traffic comes through the



Pier," said Odyssey Boat Cruise team member, Jasmine Bundy.

While this crew is trying to stay afloat, I Dream of Falafel (IDOF) restaurant manager is also adjusting to the transition, helping get their other businesses up and running.

"Though we have multiple locations, our primary business is [at the Pier]. We hope this is not permanent." said IDOF manager, Jill Schmidt.

Navy Pier is the most visited attraction in Illinois, there is hope for a reopening in Spring 2021,

The Pier is still accepting donations starting at \$25 on the Navy Pier website, via mail or through stock for free programs and in support to local artists and organizations.