

Hibbing Bowling Center

The Hibbing Bowling Center, a brief history:

The Hibbing Bowling Center (HBC) was built in 1953 and owned and operated by Francis (Fritz) VonderHaar. The original bowling alley had 12 lanes and a hotel, The Northern Hotel, above the lanes. The hotel was in use from 1953 thru the early 1960s when Fritz closed the hotel due to excessive operating costs.

In 1957, automatic pin setters were installed at HBC, these pin setters are still in use today.

The next update was done in 1974 when two lane automatic scorers were installed, the third in the United States. This eliminated the need to keep score by hand.

The Thirteenth Frame bar was added the late 1970s when Fritz was able to obtain a liquor license from the city of Hibbing.

This was the only main update until 1988 when AS 80 Auto Scorers were put in.

The first change to the outside of the building occurred in 1995 when Fritz tore down the no longer operable hotel. This allowed for new metal siding to be put onto the front and update the look of the building.

In 2002 when Fritz's eight children took over the business, HBC underwent a major renovation; the outdated interior underwent a drastic change. The old counter was replaced with new tongue and groove wood siding, new covers were put on the chairs and the mirror was taken down. The walls were redone using the same tongue and groove siding on three of the four walls with a red brick accent wall. The distinct bowling pins on the North wall, that honored every 700 bowled at HBC, were removed and plaques were added above the window connecting the alleys to the Thirteenth Frame. Additionally, the noticeable red carpet was removed and replaced with new grey carpet which matched the new tables and bowling ball storage racks.

Another step towards completing the renovations to the HBC were new touchscreen Frame Works Auto Scoring screens added in 2003.

The second to last step in the renovation was to add new HD monitor screens to the alleys. These new monitors replaced the old bubble monitors over the alleys and allowed for use of new scoring graphics.

The final stage of the renovation was completed in 2010 when the Thirteenth Frame underwent its face-lift. The bar was replaced with the same tongue and groove siding as the main area; however, the original bar top was kept. The paneling was also replaced with updated tongue and groove siding to create a continuous feel throughout the building.

In 2014 the mainframe computer system was updated to have the latest technology at HBC from Brunswick.