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SAAADA News

Hi folks,

You made it. We made it. To the end of 2020, the worst year that I can recall. But we are still here, and 2021 beckons ...

Looking back to the start of 2020, we expected other challenges. New amendments to the firearms legislation, perhaps. EWC, down-grades, all seems bad, but nothing prepared us for the impact of Covid-19.

Our world, our country, our ranks, contain believers and non-believers. Both are right; the virus kills; as does closing the economy. But we have no real choice here, it is not one or the other – not the economy or the virus. Left to run rampant, the economic impact of a runaway, deadly virus would be devastating on the economy too. But this message is not aimed at re-opening this debate, but rather simply acknowledging the various sides of this complex situation and that there is no easy solution.

Many of the regulations imposed during the early stages of lockdown were silly, to say the least. SAAADA played a role at improving things for all dealers, by taking several cases to the courts. We succeeded in all of these.

As South Africa moved progressively out of Lockdown and the world around us re-opened, we experienced the might of the American consumer. Many firearms, ammunition and reloading equipment has been in short supply through 2020, as the mighty American consumer went into a buying frenzy, fuelled by the uncertainty of their Presidential race and the effect of worldwide Covid-19 Pandemic on the global supply chain.

Prices soared as shipping costs escalated and the exchange rate crashed. Thankfully the latter has recovered some lost ground, and thankfully South Africa still enjoys a healthy demand from sport shooters, hunters and recreational shooters.

All in all, 2020 was a tumultuous year.

As the year ended, SAAADA again stepped up to address a few burning issues. The so-called Sternberg case allowed anyone to apply for a new license under the Amnesty. When the SAPS dragged their feet, SAAADA initiated proceedings and was pleased that SAPS reacted immediately, avoiding a day in the court.

The Sternberg case also opened the door for dealers to participate in the Amnesty. After SAPS refused to accept a few firearms from dealers (to be transferred into stock, not simply surrendered), SAAADA again approached the courts to allow Dealers to participate. Thankfully SAPS again responded positively and issued a (draft) directive ahead of the court date. This draft was made available via social media yet may still be amended / improved. We do appreciate this subtle shift from SAPS, and hope that it expands into meaningful dialogue.

Our other legal challenges remain that – a challenge. They are slowly progressing, and I'll update these further in the New Year. The legal wheel turns slowly, but it does turn.

As I look forward into the New Year, please be careful out there. South Africa's second wave of Covid-19 infections is upon us, so please maintain social distance, sanitise regularly, and use a mask. My personal rule is to avoid the three C's – **C**rowds, **C**lose-contact with 'others' and being in **C**onfined spaces (with poor ventilation). Each one of us must do what is needed in the business, to serve our clients safely and maintain revenue. If we all do our part, South Africa can avoid further drastic Lockdown measures!

Due to Covid-19 we postponed our AGM until February, so more on this early in 2021.

Stay Safe, have a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Regards,

Jonathan