

# Patriot Tour draws hundreds to support troops

**Trista Pruett Daily Citizen**

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Cheers erupted from a crowd of more than 250 people Saturday as Brad Weber announced that the Patriot Tour had raised nearly \$80,000 to be distributed to the families of wounded veterans around the country.

Weber, who is involved with the Patriot Tour, was one of four speakers at the homecoming ceremony at Hogz and Honeez on Saturday.

Weber, along with Tim and Wade Fletcher, offered the bar as the final stop after being involved with the tour.

“I want to tell you just how honored we are to be hosting the homecoming ceremony here at Hogz and Honeez,” Weber said to the crowd on Saturday. “We were frankly overwhelmed by the outpouring of support we have encountered creating this homecoming event. Clearly you are a community of patriots, a state of patriots and believe it or not, yeah, there’s a nation of patriots left, too.”

Weber said they had attendees from Texas, California, Washington, D.C., New Mexico, Louisiana, Oregon, Oklahoma, Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Florida, Pennsylvania and other states across the U.S.

“You guys understand why we ride, you understand why we give, you understand why we honor and support our nation’s military. They’re all heroes in our book. There’s a little party going on in Milwaukee, but I think we’ve got it going on here,” he said, referencing the 110th Harley Davidson anniversary celebration.

He told the story of how the Patriot Tour began, when, in 2009, Nation of Patriots founder Bill Sherer spent the summer traveling through all of the states east of the Mississippi River, attempting to raise money and support for the troops.

“He did this on his time, on his own bike and out of his own pocket. But somewhere in the state of New York, all alone on his motorcycle, he realized that one voice wasn’t strong enough to carry the message that needed to be heard. In that moment, the Patriot Tour was born,” Weber said.

The tour encompasses 100 days, 100 riders and 14,000 miles through 48 states.

Weber said later that the event really was a community event and they hoped to make it bigger and better for next year.

Sen. Scott Fitzgerald spoke briefly, joking about being interrupted by a flyover before presenting a legislative citation to the tour.

“If you’re going to be interrupted, I guess that’s the way to be interrupted, right?” he said.

He also announced that the flag that had been on the tour would be raised over the state capital in the near future.

Gov. Scott Walker also spoke, remembering his childhood and his awe of the country's forefathers.

"I loved history so much I thought of the founders of this country almost like super heroes, bigger than life," Walker said. "[On a trip to Philadelphia] I realized these were ordinary people. Ordinary people did something quite extraordinary. They didn't just risk their political careers. They didn't risk their business ventures. These were people who risked their lives at the time for the freedoms we hold dear today."

He noted that freedom comes with a price and honored not only the men and women on the tour, but also those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and their loved ones.

"We thank those men and women who served all throughout our nation's history. And we continue to pray, not just thank, but pray for those serving in harm's way, all across the world today," Walker said.

Bill Sherer emphasized that it all started 100 days ago with one rider accepting one mission, to take the flag to another rider in another state, who would continue the mission, until 100 riders had made it through all 48 states.

"They pressed on through foul weather. There was no payment. There was no fame, no glory," Sherer said. "There was only pride as each rider understood that their seemingly small role in this journey was critically important, making sure that this flag made it around the country on an amazing patriotic journey."

He said that sometimes he is asked why? What would make one rider brave punishing winds, horizontal rains and blistering heat for a flag? It's some cloth, some stitches, and some pretty colors.

"I say to those people that ask that question, if it's just a piece of cloth, then you go and you ask one of these people in this crowd why they would risk life or limb for that flag. I challenge you to ask any of these patriots why they would risk so much for so little. Ask them why they endure. Ask them what happens if they quit this nation," Sherer said. "We see much more than just cloth. It's what those colors embody. It's what they represent that our military protects, defends and dies for, and it's exactly that service that we honor and thank them for. "

He said that when the flag left Wisconsin, the rider was joined by more than 200 others.

Coming home, more than 250 cyclists joined the rider.

"I think what's so very special about this effort is that even though the flag bearers are alone in their task to care for the flag on their journey, they don't ride alone. As we saw today, they don't ride alone," Sherer said. "They all proudly escorted this flag in honor of America's armed forces members."