

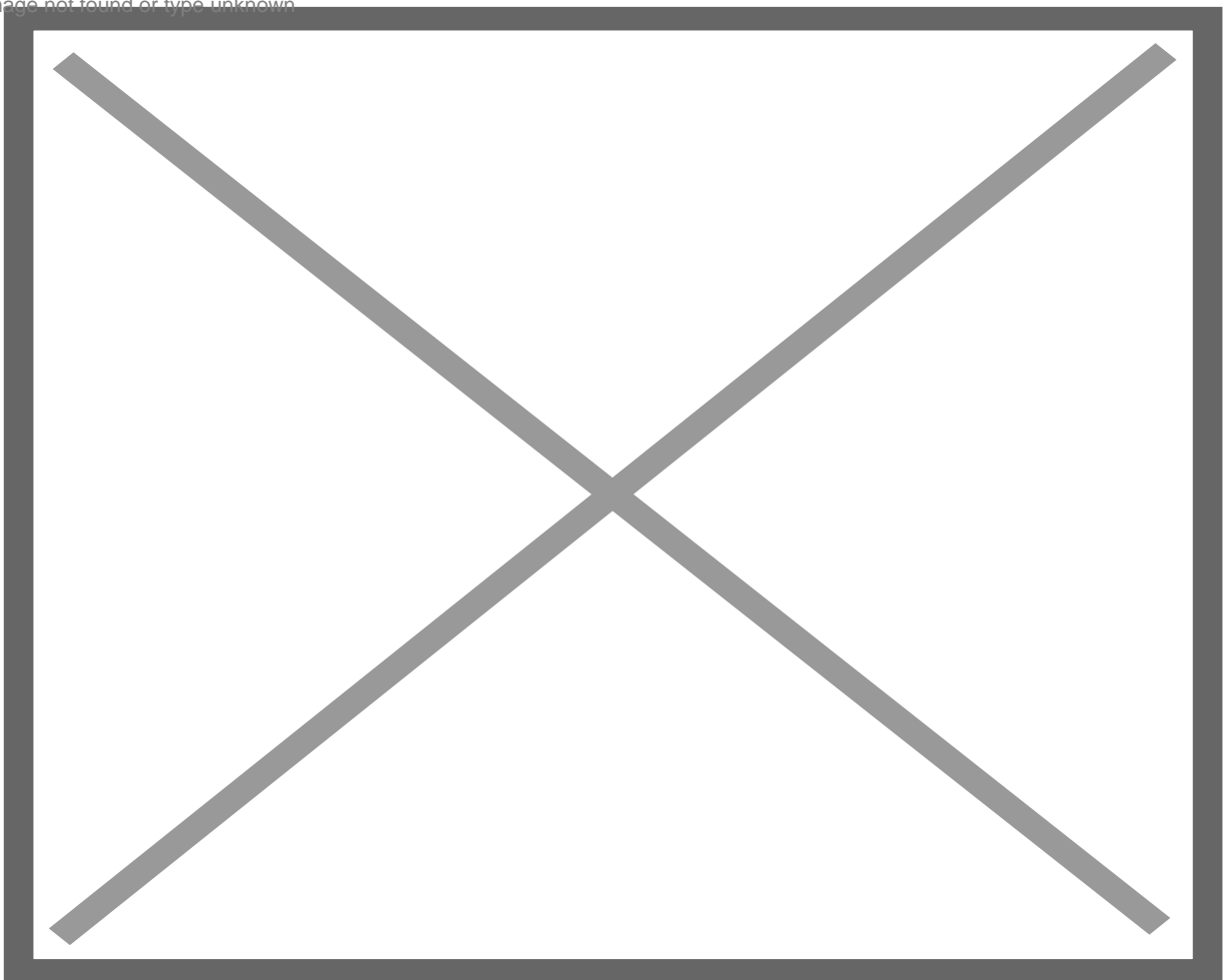
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Chicken 'n Bowling, the Popular St. Thomas Spot for Family Fun and the Nightlife, Permanently Closes Amid Coronavirus Crisis and High Electricity Prices

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Former Havensight home of popular Chicken 'n Bowling chicken joint/ bowling alley/ game room/ bar By. ROBERT MOORE, VI CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — Chicken 'n Bowling is dead.

It was a casualty of the COVID-19 outbreak, for sure. But the cause of the two-year-old nightspot/ chicken joint/ bowling alley's demise may also have been tied to WAPA, whose sky-high electricity rates have led to the slow bleeding of territory businesses.

Ironically, Monday's massive, daylong power outage on St. Thomas and St. John made it difficult to reach Chicken 'n Bowling owner Hooman Pedram. Governor Albert Bryan, however, noted the permanent closing of the popular chicken joint/ bowling alley/ game room/ bar during the governor's regular coronavirus update. The passing of the popular spot for family fun and nightlife was a mere footnote to a list of establishments that would or would not resume operating under new guidelines for non-essential businesses.

Before its passing, Chicken 'n Bowling was housed in a 7,000-square-foot location in the Al Cohen Plaza next to the Havensight Mall. It opened to great fanfare in 2018, and featured large screen TVs, games, a stage for live music and, of course, 100-foot bowling lanes. To keep things authentic, Mr. Pedram and crew hired professionals to teach them the ins and outs of running a bowling alley.

Less than a year ago, Mr. Pedram was among WAPA business and residential customers to testify before the Public Services Commission in opposition to a planned WAPA rate increase. He complained at the time that electricity bills of thousands of dollars per month were making it difficult to successfully operate a restaurant.

The chicken? Coal-fired rotisserie chicken marinated for 24 hours in what Mr. Pedram, at the time, called a "secret brine."

Formal notice of the death of Chicken 'n Bowling's couldn't be found on its once-active social media.

Only a single-line obituary on the establishment's Facebook page marked its passing: Permanently Closed.