

2008 CONFERENCE & ANNUAL MEETING BOASTS ANOTHER SUCCESS



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The Association of Iowa Fairs enjoyed another near record turnout for its 2008 Conference and Annual Meeting held on December 5, 6 & 7, at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines.

A large contingent of representatives from the 107 fairs in Iowa, plus representatives of the 130 plus associate members converged onto the Conference Center for a weekend of learning, sharing and fun. Preliminary registration figures showed just at 1,425 people registered for the Conference.

The opening business meeting of the Association was held on Friday afternoon, as well as I.A.F.E. (International Association of Fairs & Expositions) sponsored workshop immediately after the AIF's opening business meeting. Barb Hensinger, Michigan Department of Agriculture, presented "On the Board, What Now". Barb's presentation proved to be one of the highlights of Conference, as evidenced by the enthusiastic response from a full room of attendees.

After the IAFE workshop Phil Hurst, Manager of the Clay County Fair in Spencer hosted a session entitled "Making the Unusual Usual". "New Faces in New Places and Tossed Salad" moderated by AIF directors. Also held Friday evening was a non-stage showcase highlighting associate members that specialize in grounds attractions.

The "Partlow Reception" was held Friday early evening for all members of the Association, which was followed by the Awards Banquet.



Workshops were well attended.

Following the Awards Banquet, a 'Non-Stage Showcase' was held, which featured associate members who specialize in grounds attractions.

The Saturday schedule was packed with seminars, workshops and the ever-popular entertainment showcase. Saturday workshops and seminars included "Weave a Web (site) to Capture More of What You Need -- Guests, \$\$\$, Attention" presented by Marla J. Calico, Director of Grants and Special Education, I.A.F.E.; "Tossed Salad" and "New Faces in New Places" moderated by Association Directors; "I.S.U. Extension Task Force Review" with Chuck Morris, Director, 4-H Youth Programs, Lois Hunt, SE Area Extension Education Director and Dennis Johnson, Worth County CEED serving as workshop facilitators; "Youth Games at Your Fair" presented by Kathy Boswell, Adams County; "2009 Fair Ideas" presented by Arlette Hollister, Superintendent of Food, Iowa State Fair; and "Going Green at your Fair" moderated by John Harms, Jones County Fair, Katie Harms, AIA/Leed AP, OPN Architects, Cedar Rapids and Marla Calico, Director of Grants and Special Education, I.A.F.E.

Saturday evening featured the very popular "Social A'Fair and Auction". This included a large social and supper attended by over 700 Association members. Following the Social and Auction was the "President's Reception", hosted by 2008 AIF Board President Don Cain and his wife Carol, and members of the Clinton County Fair Board.

Sunday morning started out with a church service dedicated to deceased fair board members in Iowa followed by the popular "Fairman's Breakfast". Following the breakfast Candice Nash-Farrer, Plymouth County Fair, presented her popular workshop "Advertising & Marketing Your Fair". Also held was "Open Forum", where topics relating to the fair industry were discussed among those attending this session.

SPOUSES' ACTIVITIES

Spouse's tour on Friday afternoon included the "Holly and Ivy Tour", where spouses enjoyed an afternoon of touring the Salisbury House, Terrace Hill, Butler Mansion and two private homes, all beautifully decorated for Christmas.

Another spouses' activity was held Sunday morning. Susan Battani, a representative of *Upper Case Living*, hosted a very popular session focused on "The Art of Self Expression".

ASSOCIATION BOARD ELECTIONS

Dave Hoffman elected Board President

Association directors elected to the Board include Darwin Gaudian of Primghar in O'Brien County, Jerry Hopperstad of Northwood in Worth County, Rick Palmer of Manchester in Delaware County, Jim Mohr of Coon Rapids in Carroll County, Jo Reynolds of Indianola in Warren County, and Don Cain of Delmar in Clinton County. In addition, Joe Yedlik, Jones County, was elected to fill a vacancy on the Board in the Northeast District.

The 2009 officers of the Association Board will find Dave Hoffman of Le Mars serving as President, John Straight of Logan serving as 1st Vice President, Darwin Gaudian of Primghar serving as 2nd Vice President, and Don Cain of Delmar will serve as Past President. Tom & Sue Barnes of Cresco serve as the Association's Executive Director and Executive Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.



Honored at the Friday evening Awards Banquet was Everett Amis, of Spencer and the Clay County Fair. Everett was the 2008 inductee into the Association of Iowa Fairs' Hall of Fame. Presenting this honor are Don Cain (left), 2008 AIF President, & Dave Hoffman (right), AIF Director.



The fun auction on Saturday evening featured 134 items donated from member fairs and associates. The proceeds from the auction are used for expenses that are incurred by the Association in its efforts to secure legislation that benefits the fair industry in Iowa. This year the auction raised just over \$21,600.



The Conference hosted a Consumer Protection Workshop on Friday. Instructors were Marla Calico, Director of Grants and Special Education, I.A.F.E., and Harry Emmott, President of the Ontario (Canada) Association of Agricultural Societies. A total of 45 persons attended this workshop. Including the two trainings the AIF hosted in the fall of 2007, a total of 83 Iowa fairs have received this training.

Honorees Noted & Awards Presented At Banquet

Awards presented at the Banquet

- "Fairman of the Year" award was posthumously presented to the late Lynn Dunn, of the Linn County Fair
- "Leo Overland Memorial Showman of the Year" award was presented to Bobby Baker of Bobby Baker Enterprises.
- B.J. Brugman, from Royal in Clay County, was presented with a \$1000 college scholarship, courtesy of Staats Custom Awards of Mt. Pleasant Iowa, and the Association of Iowa Fairs.

"Blue Ribbon Fair" awards were presented to:

- Calhoun County Expo, Rockwell City (NW District)
- Winnebago County Fair, Thompson (NC District)
- Allamakee County Fair, Waukon (NE District)
- Harrison County Fair, Missouri Valley (SW District)
- Dallas County Fair, Adel (SC District)
- Washington County Fair, Washington (SE District)

The "Blue Ribbon Fair" award is present to one fair in each of the six fair districts in Iowa each year. The fair must have shown progress in providing service to the 4-H and FFA programs in their community, plus show distinguished service to the community in both fair and non-fair areas.

Conference Meetings Held

Business meetings held during the Conference included the Association's Annual Meeting, the Iowa State Agricultural Society Annual Meeting, Carnival members' meeting, Iowa Horse Racing Association meeting, Iowa Foundation for Agriculture Advancement meeting and AIF Associate Members meeting.

Visit www.iowafairs.com

The AIF's website is updated as often as needed to keep everyone up to date on changes with the AIF's membership. While the AIF only print the membership directory once per year, changes take place throughout the year. That is why the website is important.

The "Members Only" site is full of information for member fairs. All Fairs need to setup their user ID and password to have access to this area of the website. Contact the AIF office for instructions.



Fairman of the Year was posthumously presented to Lynn Dunn. Accepting the award were Lynn's wife Jean and family members.

Presenting this honor to the Dunn family are Don Cain (left), 2008 AIF President, and John Harms (right), AIF District Director



Bobby Baker (right), Bobby Baker Enterprises, was named the "Leo Overland Showman of the Year". Presenting the award is Don Cain (left), 2008 AIF President.

Iowa State Fair Board Elections

Iowa State Fair Board directors were also elected during the State Agricultural Society meeting, held during the Conference. Those elected as directors to the Board include Jeannie Partlow of Ankeny, James Romer of Ames, Paul Vaasen of Dubuque, Gary Van Aernam of Exira, Jerry Parkin of Winterset, and Gary McConnell of Bloomfield.

Officers of the Iowa State Fair Board for 2009 will be Gary Van Aernam serving as President, Randy Brown serving as Vice President; and Jeanne Partlow serving as the Treasurer. Gary Slater is the Secretary/Manager of the Iowa State Fair.

2009 AIF Spring District Meetings

District meetings dates and locations could change.

District business meeting will follow the meal.

Meeting details are sent out to fairs in each district by the District Secretary.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Saturday evening, March 21, 2009

Hosts: Clay County Fair Board

Clay County Regional Events Center -- Spencer

Social starts at 5:00 p.m. -- Meal at 6:00 p.m.

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon -- March 22, 2009

Hosts: Tama County Fair Board

North Tama Activity Center, Traer

Social starts at 1:00 p.m. -- Meal at 1:30 p.m.

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon -- March 15, 2009

Hosts: Dubuque County Fair Board

Dubuque County Fairgrounds, Dubuque

Social starts at 1:00 p.m. -- Meal at 1:30 p.m.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Saturday evening -- April 4, 2009

Hosts: Monona County Fair Board

Danish Inn, Elkhorn, IA

Social starts at 5:30 p.m. -- Meal at 6:00 p.m.

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon -- March 29, 2009

Hosts: Warren County Fair Board

Sports Page Grill & Bar, Indianola

Social starts at 1:30 p.m. -- Meal at 1:45 p.m.

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Saturday evening --- March 14, 2009

Hosts: Wapello County Fair Board

Wapello County Fairgrounds, Eldon

Social starts at 6:00 p.m. -- Meal at 6:30 p.m.

2008 BLUE RIBBON FAIRS



Allamakee County Fair, Waukon – NE District



Winnebago County Fair, Thompson – NC District



Calhoun County Expo, Rockwell City – NW District



Harrison County Fair, Missouri Valley – SW District



Dallas County Fair, Adel – SC District



Washington County Fair, Washington – SE District

Conference Scenes ...





Legislative Update

Once again fairs are asked to contact their legislators concerning several items of importance to the fair industry in Iowa. First and foremost, the 2009 state funding is again being sought for all fairs that qualify for state funding as outlined in the Iowa Code.

Again this year the Association Board of Directors will be hosting a breakfast for all legislators and their staff on Wednesday, March 18. This will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in Legislative Dining Room (lower floor) of the State Capitol. This event is a great way to showcase the Fairs and promote what they do for their communities to our legislators. All Fairs are invited to attend this event. Contact the AIF office for more information.

Your help is needed, and you are asked to contact your legislators and ask their support on all of the legislation the Association sponsors. Take the time now to respond.

Future AIF Conference & Annual Meeting Dates:

December 11 - 13, 2009 December 10 - 12, 2010 December 9 - 11, 2011 December 7 - 9, 2012

Conference for these years will be held at the Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines

... FROM THE OFFICE ...

It was another busy and challenging year in 2008 for our fairs. The challenges of the historic weather kept you all guessing and adjusting schedules. Even with the somewhat uncooperative weather Fairs reported a positive year, with good crowds and overall income was up over last year. As usual everyone worked hard and endured to make sure that their fair was a success. Congratulations to all members for their effort, especially to the hundreds of volunteers that make the fair industry as strong as it is. And especially would like to extend appreciation to all our associate members for making the fairs, and the fair industry in Iowa, as strong and successful as it is. It could not be done without these great members.

Not to be repetitive, as I seem to report each year that once again the Conference was a big success. I am truly amazed at the participation, the ever strong attendance, and the cooperation the AIF receives from all of its members, both fairs and associate members, that unite for this great event. We were presented with great workshops which were all very popular. All in all the AIF Board was very pleased with all facets of it. Conference registrations were just over 1400 people, again proving that Conference is very popular with our members. I know everyone learned new things and got great ideas for their own fair or festival. Your AIF Board is dedicated to making the Conference the "#1, must do, must attend" item on our members calendars each year. And evidenced by the participation, I feel that Conference is very important to all our members. We certainly look forward to the Conference every year. It is indeed a lot of work, but seeing all of our "fair family" is really great.

As usual our March calendar is full of traveling around the state, plus we are planning on attending the I.A.F. E. Zone 5 meeting in Nebraska City, Nebraska. Sue & I are also planning on attending as many of the District meetings as we can. Again this year your AIF Board will be hosting a breakfast for all the legislators and staff at the State Capitol Building. This will take place on March 18. The Board will be meeting with legislators concerning the state funding, and other legislation that is beneficial to the fair industry in Iowa. All fairs are invited to attend this special event.

I want to express a sincere "Thank-you" to those fair folks who attended a Consumer Protection Workshop. To date, Iowa has trained 83 fairs. Kudos to you all who made the investment and took the time to better your fair.

Finally, before we realize it spring will be upon us. Even though our area of Iowa has received record snow fall already this winter season, we all are thinking of spring. And a sure sign of spring is all of the gardening catalogs Sue has been getting of late. She really puts a lot of work into her flower gardens. Sue puts her "Master Gardener" title to the test, as our home and fairgrounds really reflects her talents. And as with all of you, we are preparing for our own Mighty Howard County Fair in June. As in past years, Sue & I will find ourselves hitting the highways and back roads of Iowa traveling to fairs and festivals. 2009 looks to be another fun, and as ever a hectic year. We hope to see you soon.

Tom

Tom Barnes, Executive Director