

2009 CONFERENCE & ANNUAL MEETING SEES NEAR RECORD ATTENDANCE



242 8th Avenue West, Cresco, Iowa 52136 – Phone 866-547-FAIR – Fax: 563-547-4355 – E-mail: tsb@iowafairs.com

The Association of Iowa Fairs enjoyed another near record turnout for its 2009 Conference and Annual Meeting held on December 11, 12 and 13, at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines. Not to be deterred by an early week snow storm, a large contingent of representatives from the 106 fairs in Iowa, plus representatives of the 130 plus associate members converged onto the Conference Center for a weekend of learning, sharing and fun. Attendance at the Conference was at a near record, with 1,481 people registered for the event.

The opening business meeting of the Association was held on Friday afternoon, followed by Dr. Larry Helm's keynote address, "Running With Scissors, Why Smart Fair People Do Dumb Things and How To Prevent Them". Helm's proved to be one of the highlights of Conference, as evidenced by the enthusiastic response from a full room of attendees.

After Dr Helm's keynote address Lonie Mezera, Iowa Tourism Office, hosted a workshop that focused on the partnership of the Iowa Tourism Office and Iowa fairs.

The "Partlow Reception" was held Friday early evening for all members of the Association, which was followed by the Awards Banquet. Following the Awards Banquet, a 'Non-Stage Showcase' was held, which featured associate members who specialize in grounds attractions. Also held Friday evening was a reception honoring retiring Iowa State Fair Board members Don Greiman and Dave Huinker.



Workshops were well attended.

The Saturday schedule was packed with seminars, workshops, a breakfast meeting for AIF associate members and the ever-popular entertainment showcase. Saturday workshops and seminars included two sessions hosted by Dr. Larry Helms, whose topics were "Managing at the Speed of Change" and "Tough Times Don't Last, Tough People Do"; "Tossed Salad" and "New Faces in New Places" moderated by Association Directors; "County Extension Offices, Taking a New Direction" presented by Jerry Hopperstad and Dennis Johnson, Worth County Fair; "Pit Bulls and Butterflies" presented by John Harms and Joe Yedlik, Jones County; "2010 Fair Ideas" presented by Arlette Hollister, Superintendent of Food, Iowa State Fair; and "Motorsports Events" hosted by Rob Baker, R&R Total Productions.

Also on Saturday Kasi Koehler and Amy Haskin-Blaskovich of Billbrey Insurance Service presented two sessions focusing on the Iowa Communities Assurance Pool, its coverages and benefits. ICAP offers casualty and property coverage packages to Iowa municipalities, which now include AIF member Fairs. This capability came about after Iowa Code section 670.7 was amended in 2008; thus, designating fairs as municipalities for the purpose of joining a local government risk pool. To date, 41 Iowa Fairs have joined ICAP.

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 2009 AIF Board President Dave Hoffman and his wife Mary Kay, and members of the Plymouth 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 members of the Plymouth County Fair Board presented a workshop "Volunteers, the Mainstay of a Fair". Another workshop, "My Space, Facebook, Twitter and Blogs", was hosted by Heidi Abel, Linn County Fair.

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 Member Breakfast & Business Meeting.

ASSOCIATION BOARD ELECTIONS

John Straight elected Board President

Association directors elected to the Board include Dave Hoffman of Le Mars in Plymouth County, Tricia Rosendahl of Eagle Grove in Wright County, Joe Yedlik of Walker in Jones County, John Straight of Logan in Harrison County, Mark Drost of Tracy in Marion County, and Jim Sloan of Eldon in Wapello County.

The 2010 officers of the Association Board will find John Straight of Logan serving as President, Darwin Gaudian of Primghar serving as 1st Vice President, Jim Mohr of Coon Rapids serving as 2nd Vice President, and Dave Hoffman of Le Mars 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 were Tom & Nancy Evans, Evans United Shows, Plattsburg Missouri. The Evans' were inducted into the AIF's Hall of Fame.

Pictured on the left are their daughters, Erin and Emily. Dave Hoffman (right), 2009 AIF President, presented the Evans Family with the honor.



Subby Anzaldo, Anzaldo Entertainment Agency of Omaha was inducted into the AIF's Hall of Fame at the Friday evening Awards Banquet.

Pictured with Subby is Joan Saltel (left), recently retired from Buddy Lee Attractions and friend of the Anzaldo family, and Dave Hoffman (right), 2009 AIF President.

SPOUSES' ACTIVITIES

The ever popular Spouse's Tour on Friday afternoon. The event included a tour "Hall of Pride" and Des Moines Central Library, walk through the Gate Way West Sculpture Garden and shopping at the East Village in Des Moines.

Another spouses' activity was held Sunday morning. The "Butterfly Lady", Kathleen Ziemer of Des Moines, presented her "Butterflitz of Iowa" program.



Scholarships Presented At Awards Banquet



Alison Reynolds, from Indianola in Warren County, and Ryan Schroeder from Coon Rapids in Carroll County were each presented with a \$1000 college scholarship, courtesy of Staats Custom Awards of Mt. Pleasant Iowa, and the Association of Iowa Fairs. At left is Andy Zinkle, General Manager of Staats, who presented the scholarships.

"Blue Ribbon Fair" Awards were presented to:

- Dickinson County 4H & FFA Fair, Spirit Lake (NW District)
- Boone County Fair, Boone (NC District)
- Fayette County Fair, West Union (NE District)
- Page County Fair, Clarinda (SW District)
- Monroe County Fair, Albia (SC District)
- Clinton County Fair, De Witt (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.

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. A user ID and password is needed to access this area of the website. Contact the AIF office for instructions on getting an ID and password.



Triangle Talent was honored with the "Leo Overland Showman of the Year" award. Accepting the award are Sara Shelton and Mark Sparks, both with Triangle Talent.

Presenting the award is Dave Hoffman (right), 2009 AIF President.

"FAIRMAN OF THE YEAR"



"Fairman of the Year" was presented to Don Konopasek, of the Plymouth County Fair in Le Mars. Joining Don is his wife Sylvia (center), and Dave Hoffman (right), 2009 AIF President, and long-time friend of Don & Sylvia.

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 Bill Neubrand of Le Mars, Alan Brown of Hampton, John Harms of Monticello, CW Thomas of Guthrie Center, Randy Brown of Osceola, and Bob Schlutz of Columbus Junction.

Officers of the Iowa State Fair Board for 2010 will be Randy Brown serving as President, Gary McConnell serving as Vice President; and Jeanne Partlow serving as the Treasurer. Gary Slater is the Secretary/Manager of the Iowa State Fair.

2010 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 20, 2010

Hosts: Emmet County Fair Board

Estherville VFW, South 1st Street, Estherville

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

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon – March 28, 2010

Hosts: Webster County Fair Board

Webster County Fairgrounds, Fort Dodge

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

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon – March 14, 2010

Hosts: Fayette County Fair Board

Fayette County Fairgrounds, West Union

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

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Saturday evening – March 27, 2010

Hosts: Page County Fair Board

Wibholm Hall, Page County Fairgrounds, Clarinda

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

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon – March 21, 2010

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 13, 2010

Hosts: Johnson County Fair Board

Johnson County Fairgrounds, Iowa City

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

2009 BLUE RIBBON FAIRS



Fayette County Fair, West Union – NE District



Boone County Fair, Boone – NC District



Dickinson County 4H & FFA Fair, Spirit Lake – NW District



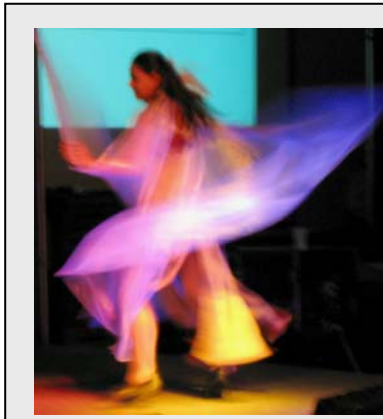
Page County Fair, Clarinda – SW District



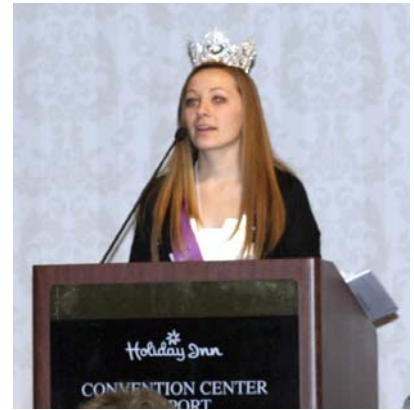
Monroe County Fair, Albia – SC District



Clinton County Fair, De Witt – SE District



Conference Scenes ...



Future AIF Conference & Annual Meeting Dates:

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 2009 for our fairs. The challenges of the economic downturn were our utmost concern. Even so fairs reported a positive year, with very good attendance and overall income was up over last year. Everyone did a very good job in marketing your Fair, its importance to your community and it being a great family entertainment venue. 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.

Each year I report that the Conference was a big success, and this year's Conference is no different. I am truly amazed at the participation and the ever strong attendance in spite of weather and other concerns. Registrations were just over 1480 people, a near record. The cooperation the AIF receives from all of its members, both fairs and associate members that unite for this great event is truly humbling. Again this Conference featured great workshops which were all very popular. The one-on-one networking is as strong as ever. The AIF Board was very pleased with all facets of the Conference. 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, our members feel the same way. Sue & I certainly look forward to the Conference every year. It is indeed a lot of work, but seeing all of our extended "fair family" is something we look forward to and certainly deem as one of the year's highlights.

It's Auction Time !!!



The fun auction on Saturday evening featured 152 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 \$18,700.

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 2010 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 Thursday, March 18. This will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the East Rotunda (main 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.

As usual our late winter/early spring calendar is full of traveling, including the spring district meetings and the IAFE Zone 5 meeting in Des Moines. Sue & I will also be attending an IAFE State and Provincial Meeting held in Springfield Missouri in May. This is a great learning experience for us, as we get to interact with our counterparts for across the United States and Canada.

Again this year your AIF Board will be hosting a breakfast for all the legislators and staff at the State Capitol. 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.

As in past years, Sue & I will find ourselves hitting the highways and back roads of Iowa traveling to fairs and festivals. 2010 looks to be another fun, and as ever a hectic year. We hope to see you soon.

Tom

Tom Barnes, Executive Director