



Serving Iowa Fairs Since 1907

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Preliminary Schedule

2025 CONFERENCE & ANNUAL MEETING

DECEMBER 12 - 14, 2025

**AIRPORT HOLIDAY INN CONFERENCE CENTER
6111 FLEUR DRIVE, DES MOINES, IOWA**

Conference Registration – Iowa Foyer

FRIDAY: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. SATURDAY: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. SUNDAY: 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Thank You Thank You Thank You

--- To the following Conference Sponsors ---

To Be Announced

Schedule is subject to Change. Updated October 9, 2025

THURSDAY - DECEMBER 11 -- 7:00 p.m. - Iowa A

Pre-Conference Mixer

Hey all AIF Fair members and Associate members ... Join us for a casual and fun evening of games! Connect with other AIF members, challenge your musical knowledge with 'Belt It Out Bingo', and see how you stack up with the others with 'Majority Rules'. It's the perfect way to unwind and get to know your AIF members. This mixer isn't just about winning; it's about building relationships and sharing a few laughs along the way. Bring your game face for an unforgettable evening.

FRIDAY - DECEMBER 12

10:30 a.m. - Iowa A

Association's Opening Business Meeting

Association President Mary Bolton will preside. Introductions, appointment of committees, and related business.
Open Forum discussion held after business meeting.

10:45 a.m. - Iowa A

Open Forum

AIF Host: Mary Bolton

This is a very popular workshop where topics come from those attending, involving discussion on the many aspects of the fair industry.

11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Associate Member Rooms/Courtyard Tables are open for business.

Note: Associate members may be available for business outside of the hours posted.

1:00 p.m. – Room 397

Conference Newcomer

AIF Host: Tom Barnes

First time attending the AIF Conference? This session will guide you through the 'ins and outs' of the Conference.

1:30 p.m. Workshops

Iowa B/C

Social & Charitable Gambling



AIF Host:

Presenter: **Dan Horner**

Unit Chief, Health & Safety Division

Dan's workshop will focus on the licensing, procedures and reporting of raffles, bingo and games of chance that county fair would need to hold raffles, games of chance and related.



Iowa A

Food Service Guidelines For Fairs

AIF Host:

Presenter: **Julie Kraling**

Food and Consumer Safety Bureau,
Iowa Department of Inspections & Appeals



Temporary Food Establishments

A review of current food service procedures, licensing and food safety guidelines.

Iowa D/E



AIF Host:

This is a very popular workshop where topics come from those attending, involving discussion on the many aspects of the fair industry.



Westview Room

AIF Host:

Workshop is Pending

2:30 p.m. - Meeting Room 396

Iowa Foundation for Agriculture Advancement Annual Meeting

3:00 p.m. Workshops

Iowa B/C

Alcohol Licensing & Sales

AIF Host:

Presenters ... **Nate Bayer, Tiffiney Brown,
Annie Gobin and Dominique Charmant**

Iowa Alcoholic Beverage Division

Licensing, beverage service practices and
current laws pertaining to alcohol service will be covered.



Iowa D/E

Oversight of Your Fair's Banking Records

AIF Host:

Presenter: **Selina Johnson**
Office of the Auditor, State of Iowa

This workshop will include instruction on best banking practices for county fairs. Selina will take attendees through a fundamental review of proper procedures for the financial administration of a county fair, such as board members, managers, and treasurers.



She will provide training on the fundamental aspects of sound financial management, record-keeping, and regulatory compliance specific to fairgrounds and similar non-profit organizations.

4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Bar & The Speakeasy

HONKYTONK

Happy Hour

*Complimentary Beverages provided by Grandstand Concerts,
Spectrum Weather Insurance and Thunder & Lightning Productions*

Special Acoustic Performance in 'The Speakeasy' --- Artist TBA



*Stop in before the Awards Banquet to enjoy a cocktail and
fellowship with other AIF Fair and Associate members ...*

Silent Auction

Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

*Silent auction items will be displayed in Iowa Foyer Area.
Silent Auction results announced at 6:30 p.m. just prior to the live auction.
Silent Auction Closes at 4:00 p.m. Sharp!!*

Awards Banquet - Iowa Hall

Honoring “Fairman of the Year”, Showman of the Year”, “Blue Ribbon Fairs”,
Hall of Fame Inductees and Scholarship Winners.

Doors Open @ 5:30 p.m.; Meal Served @ 5:45 p.m.

Member Recognition & Awards Program Following the Meal

Ticket is required to for the meal – must be purchased prior to Conference

Meal ticket not required to attend the Member Recognition and Awards Program

2025 ‘BLUE RIBBON FAIR’ AWARDS

Blue Ribbon Fair displays located in Iowa Foyer

Northwest District	Calhoun County Fair	Rockwell City
North Central District	Wright County Fair	Eagle Grove
Northeast District	Chickasaw Big Four Fair	Nashua
Southwest District	Page County Fair	Clarinda
South Central District	Ringgold County Fair	Mount Ayr
Southeast District	Iowa County Fair	Marengo

8:00 p.m. to 10:40 p.m. - Ballroom

Entertainment Showcasing - Showcasing Details on Page 10

8:30 p.m. – Room 397

Honoree Reception

All Conference attendees are invited to attend this reception honoring Randy Brown of Osceola, who is retiring from the Iowa State Fair Board after many years of service to the Iowa State Fair representing the South-Central District.

Stop in and thank Randy for his service to the fair industry.

Posting Conference photos or comments to Social Media?

Tag #iowafairs in your posts.

SATURDAY - DECEMBER 13

7:00 a.m. – Room 397

Joint Board Meeting - Association Board and Iowa State Fair Board

8:00 a.m. - Ballroom South

Associate Members Breakfast & Business Meeting

(Ticket required to eat breakfast – must be purchased prior to Conference)

Special 'Thank You' to Luehrs Ideal Rides For Sponsoring the Associate Members Breakfast



8:30 a.m. - Iowa A -- Keynote Address

Featuring ... **Ian Hill**

Ian Hill and The Changing Point

25 years of inspiring change in individuals, organizations and communities!



You Make THE Difference National Initiative led by Ian Hill.

Ian Hill, a visionary social innovator and leadership expert, is dedicated to creating lasting change in communities worldwide.

His You Make THE Difference National Initiative is a groundbreaking initiative that equips fair boards and community leaders with the skills, tools, and strategies they need to thrive. It's more than a program — it's a movement to empower leaders who truly make a difference in their communities.

Fairs, their boards, and volunteers are the backbone of these initiatives, driving economic growth, fostering civic engagement, and connecting generations. Ian Hill's program focuses on fostering resilience, collaboration, and innovation among these vital leaders, ensuring fairs remain impactful and sustainable.



Together, We Aim To ...

1. **Support Fair Leaders:** Provide tailored training to help fair boards recruit and retain volunteers, boost revenue, and engage their communities more effectively.
2. **Modernize Fair Operations:** Equip fair organizers with the tools and resources to serve and attract today's audience of fairgoers.
3. **Enhance Community Impact:** Empower fairs to serve as hubs of connection, tradition, and opportunity, fostering unity and supporting local economies.

Individual Meetings with AIF Districts will be held in Westview Room on Saturday.

Allow ½ hour for the meeting. Please have your Fair represented at your meeting.

NW & SW Districts: **11:15 a.m.**

NC & SC District: **12:45 p.m.**

NE & SE Districts: **2:30 p.m.**

Saturday continued...

10:00 a.m. - Meeting Room 292 -- Carnival Owners Meeting

10:00 a.m. - Meeting Room 396 -- Iowa Harness Horse Association Meeting

10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Associate Member Rooms/Courtyard Tables are open for business.

Note: Associate members may be available for business outside of the hours posted.

11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. - Ballroom

Box Lunch Served

Ticket required. Lunch may be taken to other areas of the Conference Center.

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. - Ballroom

Associate Member Introductions & Non-Music Act Showcase

10:00 a.m. Workshops

Iowa A

Livestock Updates

**Youth Shows, Check-in/Weigh-in Procedures,
& State of Iowa Livestock Show Regulations**

AIF Host:

Presenter: Dr. Jeff Kaisand, State Veterinarian



Dr Jeff will lead a discussion focusing on State of Iowa regulations relating to the

exhibition of animals at a county fair, public health issues and concerns, proper animal presentations, responsibilities of a county fair and ethical practices by exhibitors and families. Input from attendees is welcomed and encouraged.



Ballroom North

Build a Social Media Strategy

AIF Host:

Presenter: Chris Snider

Drake University Professor & CEO of Chris Snider Designs, Des Moines

Are you ready to take your Fair's social media presence to the next level? In this interactive 90-minute session, Chris Snider will walk you through his proven 9-step Social Media Strategy Process, designed to help organizations plan with purpose and create content that connects. You'll learn how to define your goals, identify your audiences, choose the right content pillars, and measure what matters.

Plus, you'll discover how to use AI tools to supercharge your strategy, from generating post ideas and writing captions to analyzing engagement and uncovering trends. Whether you're a one-person team or part of a larger communications effort, you'll leave with a clear framework and practical tools to build (or rebuild) a powerful social media plan for your Fair.



Iowa B/C

Ensuring Safety at Your County Fair

AIF Host:

Presenter: Randy Jones, Chief of Police, Iowa State Fair

A county fair is a cherished tradition, bringing together the community for fun and celebration.

This workshop is designed for county fair staff, board members, vendors, and volunteers, addressing key safety and security considerations to help prevent accidents and manage incidents effectively.

Participants will learn best practices to create a safer environment for fairgoers and to prepare their teams to respond confidently to a range of potential situations.



Iowa D/E



AIF Host:

This workshop will feature an interactive discussion on three topics that are pertinent to Fairs. Each topic will have 20 minutes of discussion time. The host will start the discussion on each topic and then monitor the open discussion from workshop attendees.

Topics of discussion include:

- To Be Announced

Saturday Afternoon Workshops – Times as Noted

1:30 p.m. - Iowa A

Insurance Essentials for Fairs Protecting Your Assets and Your Future

AIF Host:

Panelists To Be Determined

This session will look at the various areas of risk a fair board has to deal with. These would include general liability, property, special events, coverage for entertainers, volunteers and other specialty insurance coverages.

The panel members will also discuss the rising costs of insurance coverage and what county fairs can do to hold their insurance costs as low as possible, and still maintain coverage to protect the fairs from financial difficulties due to property and liability claims.



1:30 p.m. – Ballroom North

A Guide to Short-form Videos

AIF Host:

Presenter: Chris Snider

Drake University Professor & CEO of Chris Snider Designs, Des Moines

Short-form video is one of the most powerful ways to connect with your audience, but where do you start? In this hands-on, 90-minute workshop, Chris Snider will guide you through the fundamentals of what makes great video content and how to apply those principles to short-form platforms like Instagram Reels and TikTok.



You'll learn a simple, repeatable model for creating vertical videos that capture attention, tell your story, and drive engagement. Bring your phone and be ready to create. This session combines strategy, storytelling, and practical production tips to help you leave with the confidence (and content plan) to start posting right away.

1:30 p.m. - Iowa B/C

Building the Event -- From the Ground Up --

AIF Host:

Presenters ...

Jason Brown & John Christie, Bobby Baker Entertainment



Jason and John will be sharing their experiences in the music business on how to make your fair shows more of an inviting venue, and not just a show on a dirt track. In addition, they will be discussing on how important proper communication is between fair boards

and artists, contract riders, and venue set-up.

1:30 p.m. - Iowa D/E

Driving Revenue with Mobile Bites Host a Successful Food Truck Event at the Fairgrounds

AIF Host:

Presenter: Steve Meek, Pottawattamie County Fair

This workshop will share real-life experiences with county fair board members and event planners who want to turn their fairgrounds into a thriving food truck destination. Learn how to capitalize on the growing food truck trend by hosting profitable, engaging, and delicious food truck events.

Learn all the essential ingredients for success, from initial planning to day-of execution and beyond. Whether you're looking to host a single food truck rally or integrate a fleet of mobile vendors into your annual calendar, you'll leave with a practical roadmap for making it happen.



3:00 p.m. – Ballroom North

Building a Better Fair with Paid Staff

Panelists to be Discussion

AIF Host:



County fairs have traditionally relied on a dedicated team of volunteers.

However, with increasing operational demands, a paid staff can provide a critical

backbone of professional support. This workshop explores best practices for incorporating paid employees into your fair's workforce, covering recruitment, compensation, scheduling, and management.

3:00 p.m. – Ballroom South

Harvesting Happiness A County Fair Positivity Workshop

AIF Host:



From the cheers of the livestock show to the sweetness of cotton candy and the thrill of the carnival rides, the county fair is more than just an annual event - it's a rich source of positive experiences.

This workshop invites you to explore the power of positive psychology by reflecting on the simple joys and vibrant community spirit that define your fair by sharing your stories of successes and uplifting experiences at your Fair. The sharing of positive impacts at your Fair will reinforce the principles of positive psychology to help you "harvest" the happiness your fair provides and carry it with you long after the gates close. A perfect session for anyone looking to build a more positive mindset and connect with the heart of their community.

4:00 p.m. – Ballroom South

Secretary/Managers' Workshop

AIF Host: Ashley Fitzgerald

This workshop will focus on the responsibilities of those people serving as the secretary and/or manager of their county fair. Both volunteer and paid secretary/managers are welcome.

Topics of discussion include board and committee meeting minutes, board correspondence, assisting board treasurer, meeting agendas, agent of the board and other areas of responsibility. Audience participation is encouraged.



YOUNG

PROFESSIONALS

4:00 p.m. - Westview Room

SOCIAL & NETWORKING

Open to persons under 40 years of age that are actively involved with their fair.

AIF Host:

YPI Host:

Stop in and enjoy networking with your fellow colleagues...

The IAFE's Young Professionals (YP) is comprised of dozens of under 40-year-old fair industry leaders who are passionate about the progression and growth of fairs for the future. In addition to providing professional development, networking, and educational opportunities for its members, YP serves as a channel for idea sharing and furthering relationships among fair leaders across the U.S. and Canada.

6:00 p.m. - Iowa Hall

Social A'Fair & Auction

Food served from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

Ticket required to eat at Social.

Silent Auction results announced at 6:00 p.m.

Live Auction starts at 6:15 p.m.



2025 Theme ... **PIRATES OF THE FAIRABEAN**



Social A'Fair Menu is a Fair Foodie Fest featuring these Food Stations....

Station 1: Taco Food Truck featuring Walking Tacos

Station 2: Snack Shack Food Truck with Ice Cream Treats, Frosty Malts, Warm Cookies

Station 3: All American Food Truck with Corn Dogs, Hamburgers and Chicken Tenders

Station 4: Hot Beef Sundae Station 5: Lemonade Stand Station 6: Beer Tent Station 7: Popcorn

All AIF members are encouraged to participate in the Auction.



8:30 p.m. – Room 397

AIF President's Reception

Host: AIF Board President Mary Bolton

Meeting Rooms Available to Fair Boards

Rooms 298 and 398 are available for Fair Boards to use as a meeting location to discuss proposed entertainment, workshop ideas or any other business. Not required to reserve a time to use a room. Be courteous of others using the rooms.

All Persons attending Conference must register.

2025 Conference badges required for admission to all functions.

Cell phones are to be set to 'silence mode' or turned off during sessions and events.

'Resource Tables' located in Ballroom Foyer

Fairs are asked to share premium books, posters, fair swag, advertising et al.

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 14

7:30 a.m. - Iowa B/C

All-Faiths Worship Service

Open to persons of all faiths. Service in memory of deceased Fair Board members.

Leroy Perkins, Wayne County, Minister

8:15 a.m. - Iowa A

Fairman's Breakfast

Ticket required - AIF Host: Mark Troester

9:00 a.m. - Iowa A



Ian Hill -- The Journey Begins...

Ian will provide a summary of his 'You Make THE Difference' initiative and outline what to expect at the AIF District meetings in February/March 2026, as well as discuss the next steps of his initiative.

10:15 a.m. - Iowa A

Association of Iowa Fairs Annual Meeting & State Agricultural Society Annual Meeting

Mary Bolton, AIF Board President, presiding

Kurt Claeys, Iowa State Fair Board President, presiding

Attendance is required at both annual meetings.

— End of 2025 AIF Conference & Annual Meeting —

Future AIF Conference & Annual Meeting Dates

December 11 to 13, 2026 at the Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines

December 10 to 12, 2027 at the Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines

*Friday, 8:00 p.m. to 10:40 p.m. – **Ballroom***

2025 Entertainment Showcasing

Entertainment showcasing details to be announced.