

2006 Conference Highlights

Attendance Remains Strong

The Association of Iowa Fairs enjoyed beautiful weather and a near record turnout for its 2006 Conference and Annual Meeting held on December 15, 16 and 17, 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 1,400 people registered for the Conference.

The opening business meeting of the Association was held on Friday afternoon, as well as a spouse's tour of the Suzette's Candies, St. John's Basilica and a stop at historic Valley Junction. I.A.F.E. (International Association of Fairs & Expositions) sponsored a workshop on Friday afternoon, immediately after the AIF's opening business meeting. Barney Cosner, Manager of the Nebraska State Fair in Lincoln, Nebraska, presented "How Important Are You?" Barney's presentation proved to be one of the highlights of Conference, as evidenced by the enthusiastic response from a full room of attendees.

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

The Saturday schedule was packed with seminars, workshops and the ever-popular entertainment showcase. Panel discussions involved the topics; "Fair Parades" with panel members Cherrie Mohr, Carroll County Fair & Duane Hansen, Jackson County Fair; "Alternatives to a Carnival" with panel members Neil McCoy, Page County Fair & Debbie Straight, Harrison County Fair; and "Community Centers/All-Season Buildings" with panel members Katy Elson, North Iowa Fair, Jeannie Domeyer, Delaware County Fair and John Harms, Great Jones County Fair.

Saturday workshops and seminars included "Iowa Fairs & I.S.U. Extension" moderated by Chuck Morris, Director, Iowa 4-H Program; "New Faces in New Places", and "Tossed Salad" moderated by Association Directors; "Liability Insurance & Local Agencies" presented by Tom Christianson of Jaspersen Insurance & Realty, Hampton Iowa; "Livestock Exhibitions – The Who's, What's and Why's" moderated Dr. David Schmitt, State Veterinarian for Iowa; "Premise ID & Livestock Tracking" moderated Steve White, Iowa Department of Agriculture; "2007 Fair Ideas" presented by Arlette Hollister, Superintendent of Food, Iowa State Fair; "The How's & Why's of '501 c 3' Status for Fairs" presented by Don Timmins, CPA, Timmins, Kroll & Jacobsen, Des Moines; "Emergency Plan for Fairs & Festivals" presented by Tom Barnes, Mighty Howard County Fair; and "I.A.F.E./O.A.B.A.'s Best Practices" moderated by Gary Slater, Iowa State Fair.

Saturday evening featured the "Social A'Fair and Auction". This included a large social and supper attended by over 600 Association members. Following the auction, AIF President Mike Codner, his wife Dorothy, hosted the "President's Reception in the Presidential Suite.

Sunday morning started out with a church service, followed by the popular "Fairman's Breakfast". Following the breakfast, keynote speaker Dale Hansen, Sports Director for WFAA-TV in Dallas – Fort Worth, entertained the Conference with his presentation of life's experiences relating to youth and community involvement. Dale's address, featuring a generous amount of down-to-earth humor, was presented before a near full house.

Conference Business Meetings Held

Business meetings held during the 2006 Conference included the Association's Annual Meeting, the Iowa State Agricultural Society Annual Meeting, O.A.B.A. meeting, Iowa Horse Racing Association meeting, Iowa Foundation for Agriculture Advancement meeting and AIF Associate's meeting.

"Blue Ribbon Fairs" Honored

"Blue Ribbon Fair" awards were presented to 6 fairs, each representing their respective district, at the Awards Banquet, held Friday evening during the Conference. These went to the Palo Alto County Fair, Emmetsburg; Butler County Fair, Allison; Chickasaw Big Four Fair, Nashua; Carroll County Fair, Coon Rapids; Madison County Fair, Winterset and Louisa County Fair, Columbus Junction. This 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.

Awards & Scholarships Presented at 2006 Conference

Honors given out at the Friday evening Awards Banquet include; the "Fairman of the Year" award which was presented to John Harms, Manager of the Great Jones County Fair, and the "Leo Overland Memorial Showman of the Year" award which was presented to Dean Short Talent of Omaha Nebraska. Two Iowa youth were each presented with \$1000 college scholarships, courtesy of Staats Custom Awards of Mt. Pleasant Iowa, and the Association of Iowa Fairs. They were Klark Telleen of Monticello and Joey Reiser of Milford.

2006 inductees into the Association's Hall of Fame included Clem Smith (deceased), of Smith's Amusements in Stratford, Iowa; Richard Bradley of Dubuque, for his dedication to the Dubuque County Fair; and Tom & Sue Barnes of Cresco, for their long time work for the Mighty Howard County Fair and also their leadership of the Association of Iowa Fairs.

Congratulations to these AIF members, and Iowa youth, on the honors they were presented with.

Erlene Leonard Elected 2007 President of the Association Board Officers and Directors Also Elected

Association directors elected to the Board include Darwin Gaudian of Primghar in O'Brien County, Chad Oldenburger of Clarksville in Butler County, Lynn Dunn of Marion in Linn County, Jim Mohr of Coon Rapids in Carroll County, Erlene Leonard of Colfax in Jasper County, and Don Cain of Delmar in Clinton County. The 2007 officers of the Association Board will find Erlene Leonard of Colfax serving as President, Don Cain of Colfax serving as 1st Vice President, Dave Hoffman of Le Mars serving as 2nd Vice President, and Mike Codner of Bristow will serve as Past President. Tom & Sue Barnes of Cresco have been retained as the Association's Executive Director and Executive Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

Iowa State Fair Board Elections Results

Iowa State Fair Board directors were elected during the State Agricultural Society meeting, held during the Conference. Those elected as directors to the Board include Jeannie Partlow of Ankeny/Manson, James Romer of Ames, Paul Vaassen of Dubuque, Gary Van Aernam of Exira, Jerry Parkin of Earlham, and Gary McConnell of Bloomfield. Officers of the Iowa State Fair Board for 2007 will be Jerry Parkin serving as President, Gary Van Aernam serving as Vice President; and Jeanne Partlow serving as the Treasurer. Gary Slater is the Secretary/Manager of the Iowa State Fair.

Thank to Our Sponsors

Special thanks to several 2006 Conference sponsors. They included Evan's United Shows, Smith's Amusements and Concession, Hendrick's Sound Service and to I.A.F.E. for sponsoring the seminar presented by Barney Cosner on Friday afternoon. Sponsors definitely help a great deal and we certainly appreciate their efforts to help make the Conference the success it is.

Near Record \$20,500 Raised at Fun Auction

The benefit auction, held Saturday evening in conjunction with the Social A'Fair, had a record 131 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 has a positive effect on the fair industry in Iowa. This year the auction raised just over \$20,500.

Special thanks to those members who not only donated auction items, but to those who donated money. Also special thanks to the buyers of the items. The auction is one of the highlights of the Conference, providing a fun time to socialize with all the Association members, while at the same time raise much needed money that is used to benefit all the members of the Association.

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 2007 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 February 14. This will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the Legislative Dining Room 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.

2007 SPRING DISTRICT MEETINGS
Tentative Dates and Locations (Dates and times could change)

Please make note of the Spring District meetings. The recording secretary of each District has sent mailings on these meetings to all Fairs in their respective District. This mailing will contain meeting details, such as specific location, date and time, and meeting agenda. It is vital that all fairs attend these meetings. They are very informative, and the Association uses these to keep its members up to date on current issues. In addition, the final payment of your state aid will be distributed at these meetings.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Saturday evening, March 17, 2007 -- Hosts: Calhoun County Fair Board -- Rockwell City, IA
Social starts at 5:00 p.m., Meal at 6:00 p.m., meeting to follow
For information and reservations Contact Lisa Paysen at 712-664-2967

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon, March 18, 2007 -- Hosts: Kossuth County Fair Board
Kossuth County Fairgrounds -- Algona, IA
Social starts at 12:30 p.m.; Meal at 1:00 p.m.; Business meeting to follow.
For information and reservations contact Deb McVicker at 641-425-4407

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon, March 11, 2007 -- Hosts: Buchanan County Fair Board
Buchanan County Fairgrounds -- Independence, Iowa
Social starts at 1:00 p.m.; Meal at 1:30 p.m.; Business meeting to follow.
For information and reservations contact Mary Ester Pullen, District Secretary at 319-233-2474

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Saturday evening, March 31, 2007 -- Hosts: Greene County Fair Board
Villager Inn -- Walnut, IA, North side of I-80, exit 46
No reservations needed. Buffet supper will be served.
Social starts at 5:30 p.m.; Meal at 6:00 p.m.; Business meeting at 7:00 p.m.
For information contact Kathy Bozwell, District Secretary, at 641-322-4421

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon, March 25, 2007 -- Hosts: Warren County Fair Board
Sports Page Grill & Bar -- Indianola, IA
Social starts at 1:30 p.m.; Meal at 1:45 p.m. Business meeting to follow meal.
For information and reservations contact Erlene Leonard, District Secretary, at 515-674-3067

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Saturday evening, March 17, 2007 -- Hosts: Washington County Fair Board
Washington County Fairgrounds, Washington, Iowa
Social starts at 6:00 p.m.; Meal at 6:30 p.m.; Business meeting to follow
For information and reservations contact Jim Sloan, District Secretary. E-mail: jsloan@iowatelecom.net

2007 Annual Meeting & Conference

The 2007 Conference and Annual Meeting of the Association of Iowa Fairs will be held on December 7, 8 and 9 at the Holiday Inn Conference Center, on Fleur Drive in Des Moines.

KEEP UP TO DATE – VISIT WWW.IOWAFAIRS.COM

The Association's web site is updated as often as needed to keep everyone up to date on happenings and changes with the Association members. While we only print our membership directory once a year, changes always take place during throughout year; this is why the web site is important. Plus, as we have time, we change the "Current News" with items that are important to our members. The "Fairs 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.

Des Moines to Host I.A.F.E. “Tools of the Trade” Workshop Consumer Protection Program Offered

The 2006 IAFE Spring Seminar in Des Moines, Iowa officially runs March 13-15, 2007 at the Downtown Marriott Hotel., and will feature agriculture, physical plant/operations, and off-season facility usage. Topics will include:

- ***Agriculture** – sessions that will benefit livestock show managers & those involved in agriculture programming
- ***Physical Plant/Operations** – directed information for maintenance personnel and those dealing with grounds operations
- ***Off-Season Facility Usage** – workshops designed for those who work directly with interim events at the fairgrounds

Associate members directly involved in these particular areas are encouraged to attend this informative seminar, too!

A new pre-seminar, Consumer Protection Program workshop will be held on March 12 - 13 and will be of no extra charge to Spring Seminar attendees. The Consumer Protection Program was developed by the IAFE to help members understand enteric pathogens such as E. coli and to provide information on controlling traffic flow in animal areas, creating proper signage, installing hand-wash areas, and establishing specific cleaning protocols. This workshop is of the utmost importance, particularly for those for personnel involved in the focus of the Spring Seminar.

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Dr. Stephen Neel of TSI will present the first session of the workshop from 2 to 6 p.m. on Monday, March 12, at the Downtown Marriott Hotel. The workshop will resume on Tuesday morning, March 13, at the hotel with the program specific sessions detailing corrective actions, record keeping, design and operation of contact areas, and development of critical documents. The workshop concludes at noon, allowing sufficient time for lunch and break before the official activities of the Spring Seminar begin.

The entire program – **CPP Workshop and “Tools of the Trade”** seminar – has been designed to allow you to maximize your investment in training and travel time for key personnel at your fair.

Not only is registration deadline fast approaching (February 9), but seating for the Consumer Protection Program workshop will be limited. Send in your registration forms today to take advantage of early bird pricing.

For more information go to <http://www.fairsandexpos.com/events/seminar.aspx>

RAILSPLITTER REUNION IAFE ZONE 5 CONFERENCE MARCH 2 – 4, 2007, Springfield, Illinois

President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center

701 E. Adams St., Springfield, IL 62701

866-788-1860, 217-544-8800

(formerly the Renaissance Springfield Hotel)

For reservations, contact the hotel directly and request the Zone 5 accommodations at \$79 per room/per night.

Hosted by the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs And the Illinois State Fair

All fairs should have gotten the information on this meeting in January. The Zone 5 meeting is always a good time, filled with educational seminars, a great tour and supper and of course lots of socializing. We always learn things at these meetings. And this one looks to be another good time. We hope to see a big contingent of fair folks from Iowa at the Zone 5 meeting.

For more information and registration forms go to <http://www.agr.state.il.us/isf/zone5/>

... FROM THE OFFICE ...

It was another busy and somewhat challenging year in 2006 for our fairs. Fairs reported a positive year, with good crowds and spending was up over last year. The summer heat and somewhat frequent rain were sometimes a challenge to deal with, as the weather did keep the fairs guessing, but as usual everyone worked hard and endured to make sure that their fair was a success. Kudos 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.

Once again the Conference was a big success. The Saturday workshops proved to be popular and well received. Showcasing was very good, and the fun auction raised a significant amount of money that will be used for legislative efforts. All in all the AIF Board was very pleased with all facets of it. Conference registrations were just at 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 now 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.

Sue & I are truly humbled with our induction into the Association’s Hall of Fame. We certainly do not expect any reward for our work for the fair industry. We do it because we love the fairs, we enjoy working with all of you, and we are invigorated by the challenges presented to us. Thanks to all of you for your kind words and support of our efforts. Fair folks are the greatest!!

As usual our March calendar is full of traveling around the state, plus we will be at the Zone 5 I.A.F.E meeting in Springfield Illinois. 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 February 14. The Board will be meeting with legislators concerning the state funding, and other legislation that is beneficial to the fair industry in Iowa.

Finally, before we realize it, spring will be upon us. A sure sign of spring rapidly approaching is that Sue is ordering seeds for her many flower gardens we enjoy at home. She puts her “Master Gardener” title to the test, and 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. 2007 looks to be another fun, and busy, year. We hope to see you soon.

Tom Barnes, Executive Director