

# 2022 CONFERENCE & ANNUAL MEETING



Serving Iowa Fairs Since 1907

[www.iowafairs.com](http://www.iowafairs.com)

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The Association of Iowa Fairs' 2022 Conference and Annual Meeting was held December 9 through December 11 at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines. The 2022 AIF Conference again proved to be very successful and well attended.



Representatives from the 106 fairs in Iowa and of the 121 associate members converged onto the Conference Center for a weekend of learning, sharing and fun. Final attendance tally for the Conference showed 1,198 people registered for the event.

The Conference got underway on Friday morning with the opening business meeting of the Association, followed by the very popular session 'What's On Your Mind'.

Workshops that were featured on Friday afternoon included:

- 'Food Service Guidelines' - Julie Kraling  
(Food and Consumer Safety Bureau, Iowa Dept. of Inspections & Appeals)
- 'Alcohol Licensing & Sales' - Sarah Cain & Nate Beyer  
(Education & Outreach with Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division)
- 'Digital Ticketing, It's Not Just For Big Fairs Anymore' -  
Denis Scanlon and Maddie Snider (ETIX)
- 'USDA & Your Fair' - Paige Johnson and Shannon Sebera (USDA)
- 'Conference Newcomer' - Tom Barnes (AIF)

AIF District Meetings were held Friday afternoon, hosted by AIF District Directors. Iowa has six fair districts with 16 to 19 fairs in each district. Delegates from each Fair attended their own district meeting where they discussed district business and made plans for future district meetings.

Jenn Dunn (Linn County Fair) and Kurt Palmer (Delaware County Fair) hosted a social and networking event focused on IAFE's Young Professionals Initiative (YPI). The late Friday afternoon social proved to be popular as a good number of younger fair board members and spouses were in attendance. All enjoyed refreshments and snacks, while networking with others.

The annual Awards Banquet was held Friday evening for members of the Association. Honors presented at the Banquet included the "Fairman of the Year", the "Leo Overland Memorial Showman of the Year" and recognizing the Fairs that received the AIF's "Blue Ribbon Fair" award for 2022.

In addition, the 2022 Hall of Fame inductees and recipients of the AIF's scholarship were also recognized at the Awards Banquet.

The ever-popular live entertainment showcase was held Friday evening after the Awards Banquet.



Award winning speaker Kit Welchlin got Saturday off and running with a very well received keynote address that focused on building a productive volunteer team. His address included multi-generational observations on life today that all that attended could easily relate to. Kit's keynote was held to a standing room only crowd.

Saturday educational workshops included:

- 'Livestock Updates' - Dr. Troy Brick (Assistant State Veterinarian)  
and Mitch Hoyer (ISU Extension)
- 'What is a Service Animal' - Maggie Donovan (Puppy Jake Foundation)
- 'Funding Opportunities for Fairs' - Ellie Burns and Rebecca Murphy  
(Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines)
- 'Fair Secretary/Manager Workshop' - Ashley Fitzgerald (Boone County Fair)
- 'Exploring Cybersecurity' - Melissa Muschick and Bailey Burchett  
(Saltech Systems, Ames IA)
- 'IAFE Member Benefits' - Anna Wilson (IAFE)
- 'Digital Ticketing' - Denis Scanlon and Maddie Snider (ETIX)
- 'Sponsor Programs' - Janice Ollendick, Dean Lickteig & Michael Ollendick  
(Mighty Howard County Fair), and Doug Hawn (Greene County Fair)
- 'Promoting Your Fair on Social Media in 2023' - Chris Snider (Drake University)
- 'Three-N-One' - Kerry Scheidegger (AIF)
- 'Beyond Rain Insurance' - Robert Holmes (Spectrum Weather Insurance)



Saturday evening featured the very popular "Social A'Fair and Auction". This event included a large social and supper attended by over 650 Association members. The auction saw 152 items donated by member fairs and associates, with proceeds from the auction being used for expenses that are incurred by the Association in its promotional efforts of its members and to secure legislation that benefits the fair industry in Iowa. This year the auction raised \$44,221.50, a new record.

Following the Social A'Fair and Auction the "President's Reception" was held, hosted by 2022 AIF Board President Steve Voss and his family, and members of the Osceola County Fair Board.

Sunday morning started out with a church service dedicated to deceased fair board members and fair volunteers in Iowa, followed by the popular "Fairman's Breakfast". After breakfast, Jeremy Parsons, manager of the Clay County Fair, shared his presentation "Now What? How to Smoothly Sail our Fairs Through Uncharted Waters". It proved to be very popular with those attending, and a fitting presentation to end the 2022 Conference.

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





*Leo Overland Memorial  
Showman of the Year*



***Delisa Dawn Spurgeon*** (center)  
Stagewest Entertainment, Lowry City, Missouri

**Fairman of the Year**



***Jeremy Parsons*** (center)  
Clay County Fair, Spencer



**2022 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**  
***Dr. Keith Miller***  
Ringgold County Fair, Mount Ayr



**2022 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**  
***Daryl Biechler***  
Dubuque County Fair, Dubuque



## IT'S AUCTION TIME!!!

The annual auction on Saturday evening featured 151 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 help grow and benefit the fair industry in Iowa.

***This year the auction raised a record \$44,421.50.***

***Thanks to all who supported the auction!!***



## AIF SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Megan Stern (middle) of Boone was awarded a \$1,000 college scholarship, courtesy of the Association of Iowa Fairs. AIF Executive Director Tom Barnes (left) and AIF Board President Steve Voss (right) made the presentation at the Awards Banquet.

*Congratulations to Megan!!*

[Mark Your Calendar](#)

## Future AIF Conference & Annual Meeting Dates

December 8 - 10, 2023

December 13 - 15, 2024

December 12 - 14, 2025

Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines

## 2023 AIF District Directors



Steve Voss – NW



Kerry Scheidegger – NW



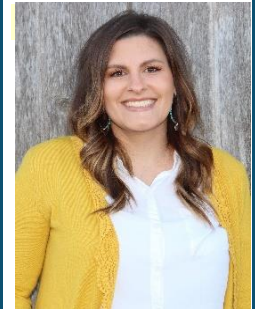
Jon Baltes - NC



Ann Schuster - NE



Mark Troester - NE



Ashley Fitzgerald – NC



Mary Bolton – SW



Danny Olson – SW



Roger Iverson - SC



Sherry James – SC



Dave Shinker - SE



Randy Beckman - SE

## 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 VerDon Schmidt of Everly (NW District), Tennie Carlson of Stratford (NC District), Deb Zumbach of Coggon (NE District), Gary VanAernam of Exira (SW District), Jo Reynolds of Indianola (SC District), and Gary McConnell of Donnellson (SE District).

Darwin Gaudian was elected as President of the Iowa State Fair Board for 2023. Curt Claeys will serve as Vice President and Deb Zumbach will be the Board Treasurer.



## IOWA LEGISLATIVE SOCIAL

Wednesday, April 5, 2023 – 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Iowa State Capitol, East Rotunda, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

This Social is a time to meet with our State Legislators to discuss state funding of our Fairs and other legislation that is beneficial to the fair industry in Iowa. All fair folks are invited to attend this special event. Your help is needed as you are asked to contact your legislators and ask their support on all the legislation the Association sponsors.

## FROM THE OFFICE ...

It was good to see the great participation at your 2022 AIF Conference. I hope everyone enjoyed your Conference. Attendance was up, meals counts were some of the highest we have seen the past several years, and everyone contributed to make the benefit auction a huge success, setting another record. Take some of the things learned at the Conference and implement them at your fair. New events, new attractions, and new ways of doing things were evident in 2022. Keep this trend going in 2023.

I am honored for the opportunity to serve as the AIF's Executive Director. Both Sue and I are proud to be a part of this Association. In our Fair travels it is evident that our Fair folks are hardworking, dedicated and welcoming. The positive words and general support shown to Sue and I are much appreciated.

Our 2023 spring district meetings are coming up rather quickly. And our 'Fair Tour 2023' will begin in mid-June. Sue and I really enjoy representing the AIF at the various meetings/events and we especially enjoy visiting our Fairs. 'Thanks' to all for a successful 2022 and best wishes for a bigger and better 2023.

See you soon....

*Tom Barnes*

Your AIF Executive Director



### Now What?

*How to Smoothly Sail our Fairs  
Through Uncharted Waters ...*

The Fairman's Breakfast on Sunday morning featured an enlightening and humorous presentation by Jeremy Parsons, Manager of the Clay County Fair in Spencer.

We have dealt with, or will be facing challenges such as COVID-19, inflation, declining population, aging volunteers, apathetic board, youth violence, and expensive entertainment. Jeremy's approach is to find a committed crew and set sail as we navigate all of the challenges facing our fairs today. By knowing who you are, remembering who you are, and telling others who you are, your fair can smoothly sail into the future.

**THE RIGHT CREW:**  
More than involved – committed!



## Thank-You Thank-You Thank-You

To the following for sponsoring snacks, refreshments & coffee breaks.

Action Theater/Impact Pro Wrestling  
Artists & Attractions - ETIX - Evans United Shows  
G.L. Berg Entertainment  
Iowa Communities Assurance Pool  
Iowa Monster Arm Wrestling  
Luehrs' Ideal Rides - Prairie Event Supply  
Scott Amusements  
Spectrum Weather & Specialty Insurance  
Variety Attractions - Vortex Insurance Agency



## ASSOCIATION BOARD ELECTIONS

### Danny Olson Elected AIF Board President



2023 Officers of the Association Board of Directors were elected at the Board's organizational meeting held on Sunday afternoon following the AIF Conference.

Danny Olson of Red Oak was elected as the 2023 President of the Board. Jon Baltes of Hampton will serve as the Board's 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Mary Bolton of Emerson will be the Board's 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. The immediate Past President of the Board is Steve Voss of Sibley.

In addition to Board Officer elections, Tom & Sue Barnes of Cresco were retained by the Board as the AIF's Executive Director and Executive Secretary/Treasurer.

AIF District Director elections were held at the fall district meetings and ratified at the AIF's Annual Meeting held during Conference. Elected to the AIF Board for a 2-year term include Steve Voss of Sibley in Osceola County (NW District), Jon Baltes of Hampton in Franklin County (NC District), Ann Schuster of Peosta in Dubuque County (NE District), Danny Olson of Red Oak in Montgomery County (SW District), Roger Iverson of Grinnell in Poweshiek County (SC District) and Randy Beckman of Sperry in Des Moines County (SE District).





**2022  
Blue Ribbon Award**

*Northwest District*

**WOODBURY  
COUNTY FAIR**

*Moville*

**2022  
Blue Ribbon Award**

*North Central District*

**WEBSTER  
COUNTY FAIR**

*Fort Dodge*



**2022  
Blue Ribbon Award**

*Northeast District*

**WINNESHIEK  
COUNTY FAIR**

*Decorah*





**2022  
Blue Ribbon Award**

*Southwest District*

**GUTHRIE  
COUNTY FAIR**

*Guthrie Center*



**2022  
Blue Ribbon Award**

*Southeast District*

**KEOKUK  
COUNTY FAIR**

*What Cheer*



**2022  
Blue Ribbon Award**

*South Central District*

**DALLAS  
COUNTY FAIR**

*Adel*









