

Alaska State Fair

2017
ANNUAL
REPORT



BRINGING ALASKANS TOGETHER

The Alaska State Fair is the largest and best-attended gathering of Alaskans in the state. We're proud to host this celebration of all-things Alaskan, and we appreciate the effort of all Fair supporters – from those who helped establish the Fair more than 80 years ago, to newcomers who join us each year, to everyone who continues to help put on this wonderful annual event.

Last year was a good Fair with many positive aspects. We had two sell-out concerts in our 2017 AT&T Concert Series, sold out all three All Star Monster Trucks shows, and had a record-breaking fundraiser for the 4-H Junior Market Livestock Auction for the second year in a row. We also saw strong increases in advance ticket sales.

At the same time, the slowing of the Alaska economy presented us with a few challenges. But as an 82-year-old event, we know first-hand that challenging times pass, and that there are opportunities to learn and grow even in the face of obstacles.

With that mindset, we made it a point to learn from our experience. We spent the later part of 2017 taking a close look at how we might improve, and what we can do differently to benefit fairgoers, sponsors, vendors and other Fair stakeholders. The inclusion of discounted Fair admission in concert ticket prices and an enhanced digital fairgoer food guide are just a couple examples of ways we can make the Fair experience better for everyone.

Our review also resulted in a renewed commitment to our essential core values, which are the guiding principles that shape our Fair culture and drive our decisions and actions. We embrace these core values as essential to all that we do. We've shared a list with you here, to remind us all of that ongoing commitment.

We look forward to another high-quality event in 2018, filled with moments that turn your Fair experience into memories that last a lifetime. Thank you for being a part of that journey.

Stephen Brown,
Board President



Jerome Hertel,
General Manager



GENERAL MANAGER
Jerome Hertel



2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From left to right: Stephen Brown, Danny Consenstein, John Tracy, Kristy Bernier, John Harkey, Jason Ortiz, and Richard Stryken (not pictured).

OUR MISSION. OUR PURPOSE.

“ **Produce a traditional State Fair** which **educates** and **entertains** Fairgoers;

Provide stable finances through **good business** practices, **statewide outreach**, **partnerships**, and hosting a **variety of community, cultural** and **business events**. ”



One of our core values is to “honor and respect tradition.” Agriculture is one of the longest-standing and most important traditions of the Mat-Su Valley – it is the rich soil that both the community and the Fair sprang from. Each year we honor our agricultural heritage with the Farm Family of the Year Award, which honors an Alaska farming family and shows appreciation for all the hardworking Alaskans committed to agriculture. This year’s award was presented to the McCollum and Pinkelman families of Delta Junction, who operate their farm, Northwest Land & Livestock, and processing plant, Delta Meat & Sausage, Inc. The families were celebrated on opening day of the 2017 Fair at a special reception attended by our special guest, Alaska Gov. Bill Walker.

OUR CORE VALUES

Honor and respect tradition
Innovate and improve
Do what we say we will do
Seek out and value public response
Live within our means
Create life-long memories



MUSIC AND MONSTERS...

We had a lot of fun – and some great successes – at the 2017 Fair.

There were two sell-out concerts in our AT&T Concert Series: multi-platinum-selling country singer Josh Turner, and the beloved American band, The Doobie Brothers. Concertgoers enjoyed improvements to the ConocoPhillips Borealis Theatre this year, including the installation of two new speaker towers on either side of the stage.

The ConocoPhillips Borealis Theatre wasn't the only venue rockin' at the 2017 Fair. All three of the All Star Monster Trucks shows at the Ram Truck Grandstand also sold out. The action-packed 2017 Alaska Champions Tour Rodeo and the ever-popular Demolition Derby were other marquee events at this year's Grandstand.

Following the historical trend, the second Saturday of the Fair was the most highly attended, with 44,113 fairgoers through the gate on that day.



6,055
MONSTER TRUCK
SPECTATORS



20,849
CONCERTGOERS



FAIR FOOD

Food continued to be a top attraction at the Fair. We were pleased to feature 69 food vendors, including our newest, Crêpes De Paris, which served up traditional handcrafted French crêpes from its booth on the Green Trail.

69 FOOD
BOOTHs

...FOOD, FAMILY & FUN!



As part of our efforts to offer great value to our fairgoers, we continued to feature high-quality entertainment FREE with Fair admission.

Some of our most popular venues and favorite performances of 2017 included:

THE GATHERING PLACE

Many different individuals and groups joined us at The Gathering Place this year to share and celebrate the state's rich and diverse Alaska Native culture. Among those who appeared at the Dena' People's Stage were Miss Alaska Alyssa London, Eskimo Ninja Warrior Nick Hanson, and Marjorie "Fastest Fish Filleter" Tahbone, who took silver in the fish-cutting competition at the 2017 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics! We were also honored to host Irene Bedard, the Native American actress who is perhaps best known as the lead voice for the Disney film, "Pocahontas," as well as Pamyua, the musical group that showcases Inuit culture through music and dance. A performance of the critically acclaimed production, Spirit - The 7th Fire of Alaska, was another highlight of The Gathering Place line-up this year.

BOREALIS PLAZA TENT

Fairgoers slipped on sets of sleek, glowing headphones and danced to their own beat at the Fair's first-ever silent disco! The fun and popular event, which was powered by the same company that brought silent discos to Bonnaroo, Vans Warped Tour, and X Games, was one of many at the Borealis Plaza Tent this year. Our youngest fairgoers also got a chance to get their groove on at the Kids' Silent Disco with special guest Clifford the Big Red Dog! Another favorite event was Cheers and Beers, a Toast to Alaska's Finest Craft Beers. The special event, which featured a tasting of local brews from breweries across the state, was the pre-party for the Aaron Watson country concert.

DON SHELDON EVENTS CENTER

This year's interactive exhibit, World of Music, featured instruments from around the world, educational programming including live animal talks starring parrots, mammals and other animals making their own music of nature, plus listening pods and educational stations.

ALYESKA PIPELINE COLONY STAGE

With close to 100 different acts taking the Colony Stage at the 2017 Fair, this venue is one of the busiest and most diverse at the Fair. From music and dance to magic and more, there was something for everyone at the Colony Stage this year.

Loop Rawlins was one of the stars of the stage this year with his unique Wild West act of trick roping, whip cracking and fancy gun spinning. During his career, Loop has thrilled thousands of audiences, from the stage of NBC's America's Got Talent to Cirque Du Soleil on the Las Vegas strip to the Colony Stage at the Alaska State Fair!



NEW EXPERIENCES. LASTING MEMORIES.

From new experiences to long-standing traditions, the 2017 Fair was full of moments to create lasting memories.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

In 2017, We received so many amazing scholarship applications that our scholarship committee unanimously approved an increase to nine scholarships totaling \$8,000. Congratulations to our 2017 scholarship recipients:

\$2,500 First Place: *Annie Kessler*

\$1,500 Second Place: *Summer Putman*

\$1,000 Third Place: *Lily Anna Sessom*

\$500 Honorable Mentions:

John F. Jones, Ruby Woodings,

Alexa Barfield, Fisher Dill,

Micah L. Johnson, and McKenna Dinkel

SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

We welcomed a total of 1,870 students in kindergarten through fifth grade for educational field trips during the 2017 Fair. This extremely popular program had 1,500 additional students on a waiting list to attend.

RECORD GIANT VEGETABLES

We continued many of our favorite long-standing traditions, such as our Giant Cabbage Weigh-Off, which celebrated its 22nd year this year. Our 2017 winners were:

1st: Brian Shunskis, 81.35 lbs.

2nd: Keevan Dinkel, 71.3 lbs.

3rd: Daisy Christiansen, 67.85 lbs.

A total of six new state records were set in this year's crops entry:

Fennel - 6' 7/8", *Phyllis Kircher*

Green Winter Squash - 616.5 lbs., *Dave Iles*

Bush Gourd - 174 lbs., *Dave Iles*

Field Pumpkin - 57 lbs., *Dave Iles*

Green Bean - 3' 9 1/4", *Dave Iles*

Carrot - 5' 11 3/8", *Walter Chastain*

MAKING MEMORIES YEAR-ROUND

While the annual 12-day event is certainly the centerpiece of the Fair, lasting memories are made here year-round. These include Fair-hosted events, like our annual Mighty Monster Boo Fest in October, as well as events put on by individuals and organizations within the community. From the Alaska Chicks Vintage Home Market to the Cook Inlet Kennel Club Dog Show, we're proud to be a gathering place for the community throughout the year.



A young boy with short brown hair, smiling broadly, is holding a white chicken. He is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a dark tie. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a fair or auction setting with other people and structures.

4-H JR. LIVESTOCK AUCTION RAISES \$221,000

For the second year in a row, a record amount was raised at the 4-H Junior Market Livestock Auction. The auction set a record in 2016, bringing in a total of \$214,312.50. Supporters helped set another record this year, when 94 livestock animals were auctioned for a total of \$221,000.

SO MANY. GIVING SO MUCH.

From employees to volunteers, and donors to sponsors, a strong, successful Fair truly is the work of many hands. Please join us in acknowledging the many individuals and businesses that contribute to the success of the Fair.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

- We welcome ConocoPhillips as new naming sponsor of the Borealis Theatre.
- We celebrate the longevity of our relationship with Spenard Builders Supply (SBS). SBS has provided over 30 years of friendship and fun as they've helped us produce the iconic Lumberjack Show at the SBS Woodlot.
- We thank The Valley Cinema and Extreme Fun Center for sponsoring our new Cosplay Day. The new day, which encouraged fairgoers to dress up as a character from a movie, cartoon book, or video game, was wildly popular, attracting more than 50 entrants in our first-ever Cosplay (Costume) Contest. We also thank Senshi Con for their partnership.
- We're grateful for AARP, sponsor of the new AARP Day (formerly Senior Day).

HELPING HANDS

We also thank the generous contributors to the Helping Hands program, which distributes Fair admission tickets to Alaska nonprofit organizations serving foster children, individuals with special needs and others who qualify for assistance. This special program is a wonderful opportunity to share the excitement, entertainment and education of the Fair with Alaskans who otherwise would not be able to experience it.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Each year, hundreds of volunteers give of their time to support Fair efforts, from our recycling program to events to our Ask Me About the Fair ambassador program. We couldn't do it with you!

This year, with the support of many volunteers, our recycling program saved 15.3 tons of recyclable material from going to the landfill.



**YELLOW TRAIL RESTROOMS
CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY**

Thank you for your contributions

From the Yellow Trail Restroom Project to the Rebarchek Agriculture Park to the Rebarchek Farmhouse Rehabilitation Project, we thank the individuals and organizations that have helped forward projects at The Gathering Place this year.

Diane Kaplan, Alexandra McKay and the Rasmuson Foundation Team

Lorin Dunlop and the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust Team

Michael Fredericks, Molly Logelin and Bryce Klug of RIM Architects

Peter & Rachael Ridge of Diversified Construction, Inc.

Larry Longnecker and Fair facilities crew Stan Hall

Howard Erickson, Erickson Construction

Richard Stryken

Bill Kramer

Rebarchek Agriculture Project Advisory Board: Margaret Adsit, LaMarr

Anderson, Sharon Hein, Jodie Anderson, Barbi Oullette, Steve Brown, Don Berberich, Matthew Beck, Bonnie Quill, Megan Talley, Michael Post, Danny Consentstein, Jerome Hertel, Kristy Bernier, Jeff Curry, Kathi Van Zant, Mike Pollock, Ivory VanZant and consultant Arthur Keyes

THANK YOU SPONSORS

“ We could not accomplish our goals without the support, involvement and enthusiasm of these committed partners. ”

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KTUU Channel 2

LOOKING AHEAD. MOVING FORWARD.



The 2018 Fair will take place August 23 – September 3, and we are already hard at work and looking forward to this year's event.

MEMORIES IN THE MAKING

The 2018 Fair theme is Memories in the Making, and we are excited to work with talented artist James Havens on the 2018 logo and Fair poster. James and his wife, Andi, are owners of Havens Studio & Gallery. James is also well-known for his role in the Alaska-Paleo Project, an annual public exhibition of his and Andi's work. Painted on location in large public venues, this event features the flora and fauna of ancient Alaska and is designed to help raise public awareness of Alaska's fantastic paleontological past. Visit the Don Sheldon Exhibit this year to see some of these prehistoric creatures on display.



2018 CONCERTS

We were pleased to announce the first two concerts in our 2018 Concert Series in December. Concertgoers could purchase tickets as Christmas gifts to see breakthrough country star Luke Combs, who will appear September 1, and Grammy-nominated stand-up comedian Jim Gaffigan, who will perform two shows on September 2. Tickets are on sale now at alaskastatefair.org.



INNOVATE AND IMPROVE

As part of our core value to innovate and improve, we are excited to move forward on several important efforts this year. One of these is our expanded digital fairgoer food guide, which will offer a search feature and provide details on Fair food vendors including description, menu with prices, location on Fair map, photo gallery, coupons, contact information and more!

We are also pleased to announce that the new Yellow Trail restroom, which is supported by Rasmuson Foundation and M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, is expected to be complete by the end of June. With 17 women's stalls, four men's stalls, five urinals, 14 sinks, eight hand dryers, a janitor's closet and mechanical room, the new 1,850-square-foot facility will help address the demand for adequate, sanitary restroom facilities to meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of fairgoers who visit each year.



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