In Alaska, our seasons are extreme – from the long, dark days of winter to the endless light and energy of summer. The hearty people who call Alaska home adapt to the changing seasons through the clothes we wear, the activities we participate in, even the food we eat!

Similarly, the Alaska State Fair is constantly evolving to respond to the wants and needs of our fairgoers and greater community. To grow and improve, all while respecting our roots and retaining our beloved, longstanding traditions.

After a somewhat challenging season in 2017, there was much to celebrate in 2018. At the 2018 Fair, which took place August 23 – September 3, we saw increases across the board from concert ticket sales and attendance to advance ticket sales and revenue.

Most notably, ticket sales for the AT&T Concert Series were up 46.3 percent from 2017 and up 8.5 percent from 2016, with a total of 28,515 tickets sold in 2018. Concerts featuring breakthrough country star Luke Combs and acclaimed violinist Lindsey Stirling were sold out, while Goo Goo Dolls and Juice WRLD were near capacity. We attribute this increase in part to a shift in strategy for concert bookings that calls for a concentrated effort to balance available Fair resources with acts that best align with fairgoer interests.

Overall Fair attendance was up, with 292,973 fairgoers in 2018, an increase of 4.2 percent over 2017’s attendance of 281,129. Fair revenue was also up in 2018, highlighted by a 5.7 percent increase in gate revenues compared to 2017. And we saw a notable increase in advance ticket sales, which were 23.3 percent higher than 2017.

We are encouraged by these numbers, as it indicates we are achieving our goal to create positive, memorable moments for Alaska families. We are also gratified to hear the many compliments and thanks for our smoke-free policy, which was implemented fairground-wide in 2016.
We are thankful for our talented, dedicated, hard-working staff, which is recognized nationally as being one of the best in the country. We were honored to bring home 11 awards from the 2018 International Association of Fairs and Expositions convention – including three first-place awards!

And, of course, we are beyond grateful for our sponsors, our fairgoers and our members. A note to Fair members to mark their calendars with the new annual membership meeting date. At a special membership meeting held during the board reception on opening day of the Fair, members voted to change the annual membership meeting date from the second Thursday in February to the third Wednesday in May. Members who joined or renewed their membership by March 15, 2019, are eligible to vote at the meeting on May 15, 2019.

We look forward to seeing our members at the annual meeting in May, and we are excited to celebrate with all of our fairgoers at the 2019 Fair!

Jerome Hertel  
General Manager

Stephen Brown  
Board President

46% INCREASE IN CONCERT TICKET SALES

“These numbers indicate we are achieving our goal to create positive, memorable moments for Alaska families.”
- Jerome Hertel, General Manager

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<tr>
<th>ATTENDANCE</th>
<th>ADVANCE TICKET SALES</th>
<th>GATE REVENUE</th>
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<tr>
<td>↑ 4.2%</td>
<td>↑ 23%</td>
<td>↑ 5.7%</td>
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After a long winter, Alaskans look forward to the newness and growth that comes with the arrival of spring each year. Inspired by the freshness spring offers, the Fair continuously seeks opportunities to evolve to better serve our members, fairgoers, community and state.

NEW IN 2018

Online Parking
2018 was the first year that fairgoers had the ability to purchase parking online. A total of 1,913 fairgoers took advantage of this new feature, which allowed them to buy a single day or season parking permit online before they headed to the fairgrounds.

Carnival Wristbands
For the first time, Fair carnival wristbands included Fair admission and all-day unlimited carnival rides for just $50 on August 27 and 28, when purchased in advance. A total of 925 fairgoers took advantage of the offer.

Thank You for Your Service
To say “thank you” to first responders and members of the military, we offered $5 admission on Military Appreciation Day and First Responders Day. A total of 7,149 members of the military and their families and 253 first responders took advantage of the new discount.

Brew Tap
An estimated 400 fairgoers raised a glass to the future of Alaska’s farmlands at the first-ever Brew Tap, which featured local brews and live music by the Super Saturated Sugar Strings. $1 from every beer purchased – for a total of $591 – was donated to the Alaska Farmland Trust, which is dedicated to preserving Alaska’s farmlands for future generations.

New Restrooms
We opened the doors to the new restroom on the Yellow Trail this year, with the support of funders including the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust and the Rasmuson Foundation. The new facility was designed to meet the needs of increased fairgoer traffic in this area, which features popular venues including the RAM Truck Grandstand and the Gathering Place.

Fair Queen
We brought back an old tradition with the crowning of a Fair Queen in 2018. At the August 23 coronation, we announced the members of the 2018 royal court, including Fair Queen Tala Ianu, Princesses Samantha Wanner and Bianca Temple, and Cultural Ambassador and People’s Choice Awardee Hannah Noble.
NEW ANNUAL MEETING DATE
A special membership meeting was held during the board reception on opening day of the Fair, where Fair members voted to change the annual membership meeting date from the second Thursday in February to the third Wednesday in May. The 2019 meeting will take place May 15. Add it to your calendar today!

WED., MAY 15, 2019 @ RAVEN HALL ON FAIRGROUNDS

"We continuously seek opportunities to better serve our members, fairgoers, community and state." – Alaska State Fair staff

FRESH IDEAS TO BETTER SERVE FAIRGOERS

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<tr>
<th>CARNIVAL WRISTBANDS</th>
<th>ONLINE PARKING</th>
<th>$5 ADMISSION MILITARY &amp; RESPONDERS</th>
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<td>925</td>
<td>1,913</td>
<td>7,402</td>
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Summer in Alaska is a time of abundance – sunlight, flowers, produce, energy, activities – and the Fair is the last great hurrah of the season. Each year, Alaskans gather at the Fair to enjoy beloved, long-standing traditions with family and friends.

**Exhibits**
Talented Alaskans entered a total of 8,532 exhibits in 19 categories, ranging from beekeeping to flowers, woodworking to needlework, and everything in between.

**Giant Cabbage Weigh-Off**
Brian Shunskis came in first with his 94-pound entry at the 2018 weigh-off. In second place was Keevan Dinkel with a 74-pound cabbage, and Walter Chastain took third with his 67.75-pound entry.

**State Records**
23 new state records were set in crops exhibit entries this year, including Dale Marshall’s 1,471.5-pound pumpkin, which also took first-place in the 2018 Midnight Sun Great Pumpkin Weigh-Off.

**4-H Junior Market Livestock Auction**
A new record was set at this year’s auction, with $224,000 raised – up almost $10,000 from last year in a continuing upward trend. The auction features animals raised by local 4-H youth, and the bulk of the proceeds go back to the youth for college savings or to put back into raising animals.

**Fair Scholarships**
Congratulations to the five Alaska high school students selected as recipients of our 2018 scholarships, which totaled $6,000:

- $2,500  Claire Childs
- $1,500  Nick Edwards
- $1,000  Ruby Lindquist
- $500  Shyanne Massie
- $500  Nigel West

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**4-H Auction Raised**

$224,000

$10,000 more than last year
The Gathering Place
The Gathering Place continued to be the center for a nonstop celebration of Alaska Native cultures, with a schedule full of singing, dancing, drumming, demonstrations and storytelling, as well as Alaska Native arts, crafts and food vendors.

Free with Fair Admission
In our ongoing commitment to provide high-quality entertainment free with Fair admission, we presented exhibits like Age of the Dinosaurs, which featured museum-quality, scientifically accurate robotic dinosaurs, developed with the assistance of some of the nation's most prominent paleontologists. There was also the award-winning magician (with Alaska roots) Eric Gilliam, Alaska's very own Eskimo Ninja Warrior Nick Hanson, talented singer/songwriters like Blaine Long from NBC's The Voice, and everyone's favorite monkey, Curious George!

Farm Family of the Year
The Olson family of Soldotna was honored by the Alaska agriculture community as the 2018 Farm Family of the Year. Brian and Laurie Olson established their farm and winery, Alaska Berries, on the Kenai Peninsula in 2007. Today, the farm/winery sells plants and handcrafted Alaska Grown products such as wine, jam, syrup, juice and vinaigrette.
Winter in Alaska is a time to cozy up and reflect on all we are thankful for. Here at the Fair, we are grateful for our many supporters, including our sponsors, listed on the next page.

Our Volunteers
We are also thankful for our volunteers, like our “super volunteers” Frank and Linda Dias, who have been a valuable part of the Fair family since 1982. Together with Linda’s sister, Gina, the three volunteer throughout the Fair, pitching in wherever help is needed. They bring love and value to every event, and their enthusiasm is infectious to everyone around them. They are beyond appreciated and 100 percent part of the team. A big thank you to all of our volunteers!

Farewell to a Dear Fair Friend
The Fair says goodbye to a beloved Fair friend, Claire Morton, who passed away December 16, 2018. A true pioneer, Claire will always be remembered as Alaska’s brave, female carnival owner-operator and the first woman president of the Showmen’s League of America. The Fair is lucky to have worked with this amazing woman for the past 48 years. Her dedication and enthusiasm for expanding the Alaska carnival experience since the 1970s has helped shape the Fair into what it is today. Alaska’s carnival queen will be greatly missed.

A “Crazy Good” Theme
Winter is also a time to dream and plan. We are already pre-planning for the 2019 Fair, which will be held August 22 – September 2. With the theme “Crazy Good,” it is sure to be a good time.

2019 Official Artist
We are honored to announce Alaska artist V Rae as our 2019 official artist. V Rae is known for her unique style, created with watercolors on canvas, and we look forward to sharing her 2019 Fair designs with you.

Year-Round Gathering Place
No matter the season, things are always going on at the Fair. We truly are a year-round community gathering place, with Fair events like the Mighty Matanuska Brewfest, Halloween Hollow, and our annual holiday bazaar throughout the year. We also host diverse community events like the Cook Inlet Kennel Club dog show, the Kids Kupboard Empty Bowl fundraiser, and the Alaska SCTP annual gun show, to name a few. New this year was the Christmas Factory, which brought to life Santa’s 500-year-old factory right here on the Fairgrounds from the day after Thanksgiving through Christmas Eve.
Thank you to our 2018 Sponsors

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