



2018 Annual Report

Seasons...of the Fair



SEASONS...of the Fair

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.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From left to right:

Jon-Marc Petersen (Director)
Jason Ortiz (Secretary)
Lara McGinnis (Director)
Kristy Bernier (Vice-President)
Stephen Brown (President)
John Tracy (Director)
Danny Consenstein (Treasurer)
Jerome Hertel (General Manager)

MISSION

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.

"These numbers indicate we are achieving our goal to create positive, memorable moments for Alaska families."

- Jerome Hertel, General Manager



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

ATTENDANCE

4.2%

ADVANCE TICKET SALES

23%

GATE REVENUE

5.7%

46% INCREASE IN CONCERT
TICKET SALES



SPRING...

A time of growth

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 lanu, Princesses Samantha Wanner and Bianca Temple, and Cultural Ambassador and People’s Choice Awardee Hannah Noble.



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



FRESH IDEAS TO BETTER SERVE FAIRGOERS

CARNIVAL WRISTBANDS

925

ONLINE PARKING

1,913

\$5 ADMISSION
MILITARY & RESPONDERS

7,402

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



SUMMER...

A time of abundance

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 Keewan 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
\$1,500
\$1,000
\$500
\$500

Claire Childs
Nick Edwards
Ruby Lindquist
Shyanne Massie
Nigel West



4-H AUCTION RAISED
\$224,000

\$10,000 MORE THAN LAST YEAR

19 CATEGORIES OF
EXHIBITS

8,532
ENTRIES

5 STUDENTS AWARDED

\$6,000
SCHOLARSHIPS

23 NEW STATE RECORDS

1,471 LBS
PUMPKIN

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.



45,703
POUNDS RECYCLED
10-YEAR RECORD



WINTER...

A time of reflection

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.

Pictured above:

Frank and Linda Dias
Claire Morton

CRAIG TAYLOR EQUIPMENT
AT&T
RAM TRUCK
CONOCOPHILLIPS
ALASKA AIRLINES
MATTRESS FIRM
COUNCIL OF ALASKA PRODUCERS
KASH COUNTRY 107.5
GCI
COKE
ALASKA OIL & GAS ASSOCIATION
BP ALASKA
ALASKA'S ROCK 106.5 K-WHALE
ANCHORAGE PRESS
ALASKA PUBLIC MEDIA
EWORX BY APPLIED MICROSYSTEMS

NC MACHINERY
MTA
MAT-SU VALLEY FRONTIERSMAN
MIX 103.1
KOOL 97.3
YOURALASKALINK
SPENARD BUILDERS SUPPLY
TOTE MARITIME
92.1 BOB FM
Q99.7 VALLEY RADIO
MAT-VALLEY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
COORS LIGHT
MAGIC 98.9 FM
ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS
BUD LIGHT
101.3 KGOT
ALYESKA PIPELINE SERVICES CO.
KTVA 11 NEWS
DENALI FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
KTMB OLDIES 102.1
SILENT EVENTS
CERTEK HEATING SOLUTIONS
ALASKA'S HOTTEST HITS, 92.9 KFAT
ALASKA USA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
SPECIAL EVENTS
GEICO & GEICO MILITARY
BROWN JUG
HOP VALLEY BREWING CO.
CARRS/SAFEWAY
UA COLLEGE SAVINGS PLAN
LYNDEN TRANSPORT
THE EAGLE
ALASKA CHIP COMPANY
PROVIDENCE IMAGING CENTER
ALASKAN BREWING COMPANY
ALASKA GROWN/ DNR DIV. OF AG.
MEA
PIONEER EQUIPMENT
BODY RENEW
COMBS INSURANCE COMPANY, INC.
BLACK LAKE BUILDINGS
DAIRY QUEEN
QIVEUT DESIGNS
IDITACHAIN CROCHET



