



**Rebarchek Agricultural Park  
at the Alaska State Fairgrounds**

# [ ALASKA STATE FAIR ]

2020 Annual Report



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To our friends,

This has, without a doubt, been a challenging year – and a challenging annual report to write. How do you report on a fair that didn't happen due to a pandemic? How do you report on undoing all the plans that dedicated staff worked so hard and so long to put in place? How do you report on sharing the heartbreaking decision to cancel with vendors, sponsors, entertainers and fairgoers?

But we have long advocated that the Fair is much more than a 12-day annual event. We strive to be a gathering place for Alaskans, facilitating community involvement and offering support, throughout the entire year. Fulfilling that function was more important than ever this year, and 2020 provided the opportunity to stretch ourselves and find new and innovative ways to do just that.

Our team used their creativity and adaptability to create opportunities for the Fair to continue serving as a place to come together, albeit in socially distanced ways.

As a private nonprofit 501 (c)(3) corporation, we are a small organization created and run by Alaskans, funded in large part by Alaskan sponsors – not state subsidies, and focused on serving, involving and supporting our Alaska community. We are proud to be one of the few private, self-sustaining nonprofit fairs in the entire country, as we are supported entirely by sponsors, grants and proceeds from Fair events. We're here for our Alaska neighbors, and we rely on them to be there for us.

Before 2020, the Alaska State Fair had been held every year since 1936, with the exception of a hiatus from 1942 to 1946 due to the War. However, the Fair was back in full swing in 1947, growing over the next several years to be bigger and better than ever. We believe the same will be true for us today.

We have set the dates for the 2021 Fair, and we are making plans full of hope. In next year's report, we look forward to once again sharing with you a report celebrating the hundreds of thousands of Alaskans who came together to enjoy food, entertainment and, most importantly, each other's company.



*Kristy Bernier*  
Kristy Bernier, President

*Jerome Hertel*  
Jerome Hertel, CEO





## OUR 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.*

**The events of 2020 required us all to do things differently. While there were plenty of hardships, the silver lining was the opportunity to grow and evolve and try new things.**

### NEW VENTURES

At the Fair, we introduced several new events that allowed the community to come together in safe and socially distanced ways.

### FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL

Over the summer, we opened up the fairgrounds on Wednesdays and Saturdays for Food Truck Fare. The event invited community members to order grab-and-go meals from a wide variety of outdoor food trucks, and provided the opportunity for local

vendors to generate business during what was a very challenging financial time for many in the restaurant industry.

### DRIVE-IN CONCERTS

We also got creative with entertainment. One of our favorite things about the annual Fair is the concert series. While the live shows on the Borealis stage didn't happen last year, there was still music at the Fair with our drive-in concerts, designed to provide music fans the closest thing to world-class, live entertainment in a safe, creative way. Hundreds of cars filled with music-lovers showed up for the Encore Drive-In Nights series, which featured concerts specially filmed for the big screen. Acts included rock band Metallica with special guest Three Days Grace on August 29, and country star Kane Brown on September 26.

**“A very special thank you to our staff for the creativity, innovation and resilience they demonstrated in creating revenue sources to keep the Fair going in 2020.”**

**Jerome Hertel**  
CEO

**Kirsten Mason**  
Finance Manager

**Jerry Baker**  
Administrative Services Manager

**Kai Tantaros**  
Administrative Assistant

**Suzy Crosby**  
Entertainment Manager

**Pamella Meekin**  
Vendor & Exhibits Manager

**Sheri Musgrave**  
Facilities Rental  
& Beverage Service Manager

**Larry Longnecker**  
Grounds & Maintenance Manager

**Chad Wallace**  
Grounds Supervisor

**Donnie Leonard**  
Maintenance Technician

**Randy Leonard**  
Maintenance Technician

**Becky Myrvold**  
Head Gardener

**Melissa “MK” Keefe**  
Marketing & Communications  
Manager

**Anna Rowe**  
Graphic Designer & Sign  
Coordinator

**Betty Shadura**  
Digital Marketing Coordinator

**Kelly Larson**  
Director of Community  
& Corporate Partnerships

# FUN SUNDAYS



## DRIVE-IN MOVIES

Concerts weren't the only thing people drove to the Fair for this year. A total of 2,551 audience members also made their way to the fairgrounds for our pop-up drive-in movie series. For \$25 a carload, attendees could enjoy a movie from the comfort of their private vehicle on a 23-foot-wide by 13-foot-tall LED outdoor screen, while a variety of local vendors offered concessions. The series featured 24 drive-in movies, including popular releases like Dolittle, Abominable, Lion King, Avengers, Onward, Sonic, How to Train Your Dragon and Hocus Pocus.

## HARVEST FEST

In an effort to offer events that carry on beloved Fair traditions while minimizing health risk, we hosted a Harvest Fest at the fairgrounds Labor Day weekend. The event celebrated the Fair's agricultural roots with events, vegetable exhibits, vendors and entertainment focused on agriculture, livestock, Alaska products, Alaska Grown produce and local talent.

The safety of festival guests, vendors, staff and volunteers was top priority and attendance was capped to allow social distancing. All total, 10,413 attendees

## SCHOLARSHIPS

While graduation day and going off to college looked very different for the Class of 2020, it didn't deter the dreams of our 2020 scholarship recipients. The Fair was pleased to award a total of \$7,500 to five Alaska high school students to help forward their educational goals:

- 1st place, \$3,000: *Isabella Weiss*
- 2nd place, \$2,000: *Casey Gooch*
- 3rd place, \$1,500: *Cameron Blackwell*
- Honorable mention, \$500: *Braden VanderWeele*
- Honorable mention, \$500: *Jessica Wang*





**In unusual year 2020,  
Big challenges we have had many.  
Giant cabbages don't know  
And continue to grow  
At the Harvest Fest we're weighing plenty!**  
– Leslie Kramer, first-place winner, inaugural limerick contest

showed up to enjoy the fall festivities. Food has long been at the center of the Fair experience, and we were pleased that 25 food vendors were able to join us at the Harvest Fest to serve up both Fair favorites and some new flavors.

Some of our most popular traditional agricultural events also took place, including a private Youth Livestock Auction featuring animals raised by local 4-H youth. A total of 61 youth took part in the auction, which raised an impressive \$185,000.

The challenges of 2020 didn't affect the growing season, and local growers were able to show off their giant vegetables, including Dave Iles'

1,092-pound, hydroponically grown pumpkin, which is a possible new world record, pending acceptance and recognition from Guinness World Records!

### **BRIGHT UP THE NIGHT**

At the close of a very dark year, we were pleased to bring back our Bright Up the Night holiday light display – and it was bigger, brighter and better than ever! More than 8,200 people took the almost one-mile drive through the fairgrounds, which were decorated with dazzling holiday light displays synced to holiday music broadcast on our Reindeer Radio station.

### **ADDITIONAL 2020 STATE RECORDS:**

**Marrow: 100.5 pounds**, grown by Dale Marshall, Anchorage

**Cucumber (weight): 20.8 pounds**, grown by Dave Iles, North Pole

**Cucumber (length): 30.5 inches**, grown by Dave Iles, North Pole

**Red Cabbage: 46 pounds**, grown by Walter Chastain, Wasilla (breaking a record that has stood for the past 26 years!)

**Hot Pepper (length): 14.5 inches**, grown by Deb Blaylock, Palmer

### **SPONSOR GRATITUDE**

While 2020 was a very different year, one thing that remained constant was the support of our sponsors. As one of only a handful of self-sustaining nonprofit fairs in the country, we rely on the generosity of our sponsors and grants. We thank them for continuing their support through a difficult year.

**2020 Alaska State Fair**  
ConocoPhillips

**Drive-in movies**  
ShowBoss  
Alaska Highway Safety Office

**Drive-in concerts**  
ShowBoss

**Harvest Fest**  
Alaska 529  
Craig Taylor Equipment  
Alaska Highway Safety Office  
Matanuska Valley FCU  
OneALASKA

**Bright Up the Night**  
AT&T  
TOTE Maritime  
ODOM/Coca-Cola  
Alaska 529  
Alaska Airlines  
Mat-Su Valley Cancer Center  
Matanuska Valley FCU  
Channel 2 and CBS 5  
Alaska Division of Agriculture  
Lynden Transport  
Silva Insurance  
KMBQ



## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	2020	2019
Income		
Gate Admissions	65,729	2,608,177
Vendors	28,350	1,585,343
Beverage	22,832	771,199
Parking	1,480	370,022
Event Admissions	314,663	1,706,960
Facilities Rental	97,820	145,593
Winter Storage	126,694	150,010
Sponsor - Cash	105,500	336,966
Sponsors - In kind	34,539	364,439
Other Income	8,375	120,536
Miscellaneous Donations	41,552	46,129
<b>TOTAL INCOME, UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>847,533</b>	<b>8,205,374</b>
Expenses		
Salaries	981,592	1,578,422
Insurance	431,900	526,855
Interest & CC Fees	33,951	158,696
Payroll Taxes	80,026	134,369
Other Taxes & Licenses	30,030	179,818
Utilities	237,651	345,396
Depreciation	419,264	444,927
Security, Parking, & Gates	6,726	505,910
Marketing - Cash	27,370	337,065
Marketing - In kind	11,500	186,511
Restrooms	94,139	167,834
Beverage	5,337	234,552
Professional Fees	116,889	148,050
Entertainment	240,497	2,322,079
Office	86,433	127,701
Maintenance	64,353	198,563
Exhibits	14,932	81,480
Other Expenses	134,776	492,219
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,017,366</b>	<b>8,170,447</b>
<b>RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>		
Capital Grants	220,000	27,500
Miscellaneous Income & Grants	1,361,992	29,500
<b>TOTAL INCOME, RESTRICTED</b>	<b>1,581,992</b>	<b>57,000</b>
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME</b>	<b>(587,841)</b>	<b>91,927</b>



## FIVE-YEAR COMPARISON

ASSETS	2020	2016
Current Assets		
Cash	1,533,895	1,562,065
Prepaid Insurance	97,372	128,007
Accounts Receivable	31,313	75,414
Total Current Unrestricted Assets	1,662,580	1,765,485
Total Current Restrictd Assets - Grants	(65,000)	26,475
Total Fixed Unrestricted Assets	6,590,160	6,819,165
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>8,187,740</b>	<b>8,611,125</b>

LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Current Liabilities		
Payroll Liability	27,428	19,381
Payables	75,493	62,641
Deferred Grant Revenue	-	111,079
Deposits	417,100	111,215
Total Current Liabilities	520,021	304,316
Long Term Liabilities	0	0
Equity		
Retained Earnings	8,255,559	8,413,250
State Capital Grants	5,260,314	5,260,314
Depr-State Capital Grants	(5,260,314)	(5,260,314)
Net Income	(587,841)	(106,441)
Total Equity	7,667,718	8,306,809
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>8,187,740</b>	<b>8,611,125</b>

## FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Attendance	0	303,989	292,973	281,129	293,424
Total Unrestricted Revenue	847,533	8,205,374	7,433,883	7,246,527	7,829,184
Total Restricted Revenue	1,581,992	57,000	354,228	229,737	224,579
Total Expenses	3,017,366	8,170,447	7,284,688	8,015,583	8,160,205
Net Income	(587,841)	91,927	503,423	(539,319)	(106,442)





# 2021 Fair

## 14 Days of Fun!

Alaskans will have even more time to enjoy the 2021 Fair, which will take place over 14 days! Adding another weekend will help spread out the Fair crowds and keep fairgoers as safe as possible as Alaska continues to respond to the pandemic. The expanded schedule will also provide an additional economic boost for our 400+ vendors and, of course, provide an extra weekend of fun!

### August 20 – September 6

Closed: Tuesdays & Wednesdays  
(Aug. 24 – 25 & Aug. 31 – Sept. 1)

**New Hours:** 11am – 10pm daily

### Front Cover: Rebarchek Agricultural Park

*Rebarchek farm, developed by original colony farmer Ray Rebarchek, is one of the first colonist farms in the Mat-Su Valley. As owners of the remaining Rebarchek property, the Fair is working to rehabilitate the farm, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Thank you Alder Architectural, Antique Power Club, Bill Allen, City of Palmer, Combs Insurance Agency, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Foundation, FFA, Gateway Community Council, H Construction, Historical Foundation Grant, LaMarr Anderson, Matanuska Electric Association, Mat-Su Borough, Northland Pioneer Grange, Palmer Historical Society, Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, Rasmuson Foundation, Spenard Builders Supply, Tanaina Folk Farm, Vannoy Electric, and Wheaton Water Wells for your contributions.*

(907) 745-4827

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