



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### UNDER NEW CEO, 2022 BIG FRESNO FAIR CELEBRATES SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A SAFE, FUN & MEMORABLE RUN

**Fresno, CA...October 20, 2022...** The Big Fresno Fair's Board of Directors, management and staff are pleased to announce the successful completion of the 2022 Big Fresno Fair, which saw more families come out, stay longer and visit more than once to enjoy all that the annual tradition had to offer. In its post-pandemic run, 559,394 smiling fairgoers walked through the Fair gates over 12 days to enjoy the 2022 Big Fresno Fair, with its new attractions, competitive exhibits, free entertainment, live horse racing, carnival rides, Table Mountain Rancheria Park, Fair food, concerts and educational programs.

"We are so proud of the hard work our more than 600 employees, plus vendors and entertainers, poured into creating the best Big Fresno Fair possible for our community," said Lauri L. King, CEO of The Big Fresno Fair. "Seeing the smiling faces of kids with their families, friends laughing together, couples walking hand-in-hand and exhibitors with their projects is why we do what we do. We are grateful for our community, for their support, for their love of this annual event; it is truly what makes ours one of the best fairs in the state!"

There was a 59% increase in advance tickets sales from 2021, signaling that the community planned ahead to save on discounted admission, season passes and unlimited carnival ride wristbands through online sales, and Save Mart, FoodMaxx and O'Reilly Auto Parts instore purchases. The also turned out to donate blood as part of the 12<sup>th</sup> annual "Pint for a Pass" Blood Drive with the Central California Blood Center. From August 30 until October 15, over 7,400 pints of blood were collected and donors rewarded with a buy one, get one free Fair admission ticket.

As the only spot for live horse racing in the Central Valley, fairgoers showed up in big numbers to enjoy and wager on full race cards throughout the meet resulting in a 3.87% increase in on-track handle. During the seven days of live horse racing, there was a total of 62 races, 389 horse starts and zero equine athlete injuries thanks to the extensive work done to make Fresno's track one of the safest on the fair racing circuit.

The focus on showcasing hardworking Fresno County youth continued in the Livestock Pavilion, where 2,580 animals were exhibited by 1,043 4-H, FFA and Independent students. A total of 806 animals were put up for auction at three livestock sales, raising more than \$1.2 million with add-ons still coming in. This money goes directly to students to support future animal projects or school needs. Exhibiting livestock has always been a part of the 139-year Fair tradition, providing an important learning opportunity for these future community leaders. Additionally, there were 19,688 still exhibit entries submitted to the Floriculture, Home Arts, Gem & Mineral, Jr. Exhibits and Agriculture-Horticulture departments, which were showcased to the community during the 2022 Big Fresno Fair.

This year, Fair Management focused on providing even more free entertainment on the grounds. A record 14 strolling entertainers roamed the grounds, including Lanky the Clown, Violin on Fire Patrick





Contreras, jugglers, stilt walkers and cowboys Slim & Curly. Plus, 2,500 hours of free entertainment were provided on the Fair's seven community stages, featuring cover bands and local musicians and performance groups. Then, of course, the Table Mountain Rancheria Park with its life-size Pirate Ship, fishing at Catfish Falls, and gold panning at Miner's Town, along with other Park attractions – all free for fairgoers to enjoy! There were also plenty of new attractions to enjoy like the Xpogo Stunt Team, camel rides, and exhibits in the Fresno County Historical Museum honoring the local Jewish and Germans from Russia communities, along with local Armenian artist Veraz Samuelian. Plus, the action-packed USA Boxing Championships and Lucha Xtreme. The return of the Pop! Culture Experience building drew record crowds with its nostalgic video games, daily eSports competitions and an exhibition by the Fresno State eSports team. It also included a full, 12-day lineup of popular cosplay characters – all thanks to a partnership with Blue Shell Gaming. Other returning favorites were the Livin' Local Marketplace that featured over 60 local artisans and Food Truck Alley.

The Paul Paul Theater was the place to be at the 2022 Big Fresno Fair for 12 nights of incredible shows that comprised the Table Mountain Concert Series presented by Modelo Especial and Toyota. Several performances were sold out, including shows by Ice Cube, Midland and Ladies Night Out featuring Ashanti and Baby Bash. Work has already begun on the 2023 Big Fresno Fair entertainment lineup.

On opening night of the Fair, the Brian I. Tatarian Grandstand was packed with excited Fresno County 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders earning a 4.0 GPA or higher, along with their teachers and proud parents. A record-setting \$100,000 in scholarships were given out at the Fair's 4.0 & Above Program, help in partnership with the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, along with laptops and other prizes. Coalinga High School 12<sup>th</sup> grader, Luis Orozco, won the 2023 Toyota Corolla. Then on October 6, a total of 16 middle and high school marching bands competed for \$15,000 in prize money, trophies and bragging rights. Top middle school winners were sweepstakes winner Burton Middle School and first place finisher Clark Intermediate. Top high school winners were sweepstakes winner Washington Union and first place finisher Hanford West. Both the 4.0 & Above Program and the Band Review are in their 11<sup>th</sup> year and are proudly sponsored by Friends of the Big Fresno Fair, Valley Children's Healthcare, Chevron, EECU, Toyota and iHeart Radio.

Plans are already underway for the 2023 Big Fresno Fair, which is October 4 – 15.

### **About The Big Fresno Fair**

The Big Fresno Fair, founded in 1884, is the fourth-largest fair in the state of California and represents the 21st District Agricultural Association. Nearly 600,000 people from throughout the state visit The Big Fresno Fair each year, making it the largest annual event in the Central Valley. Members of the Board of Directors include: Chuck Riojas, President; Terry Gonsalves, Vice President; Gary Cahil, Secretary/Treasurer; Linda Mae Balakian Hunsucker; Frank Flores; Jerry Pacheco; Annalisa Perea and Lawrence Salinas. Lauri L. King heads the daily operations in her role as CEO. For more information about The Big Fresno Fair, please visit [www.FresnoFair.com](http://www.FresnoFair.com).

