

**New Mexico State Fair Commission Minutes  
Of the Special Commission Meeting  
Friday, October 19, 2018  
Expo New Mexico  
African American Pavilion  
300 San Pedro Dr. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87108  
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Call to Order** by Chairman Kennedy at approximately 11:00 a.m.

**Commission Roll Call**

Commissioners present:  
Chairman, Larry Kennedy  
Commissioner David “Hossie” Sanchez  
Commissioner Ruth Bitsui  
Commissioner Xavier Jurado

Commissioners not present:  
Commissioner William “Bill” Lee

**Staff Present**

Dan Mourning, General Manager  
Ken Salazar, Deputy Manager  
Bill Nordin, Chief Financial Officer  
Joseph Holloway, General Counsel  
Oona Gonzales, Marketing Manager

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Wyndham Kemsley.

**Introduction of Guests**

Guests present to be introduced by General Manager during his State Fair management report.

**Action Item: Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Jurado made a motion for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sanchez. Chairman Kennedy asked if all were in favor of the agenda, and all voted in the affirmative.

**Action Item: Approval of Minutes of July 10, 2018 Regular Meeting**

Commissioner Sanchez made a motion for approval of the minutes from the July 10, 2018 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bitsui. Chairman Kennedy asked if all were in favor of the minutes, and all voted in the affirmative.

**Public Comment**

None at this time.

**Chairman’s Agenda**

## A. Committee Reports

- i. **Racing Committee Report:** Commissioner Sanchez stated that it had been a great year for racing at the State Fair, with all track wagering up by 20%. Commissioner Sanchez stated that the purses were at \$175,000.00 per day during the State Fair meet and the last 2 days of the State Fair meet they gave out \$1.2 million dollars in purses. This is a record for the Downs. Commissioner Sanchez added the State Fair is being recognized around the country for the quality of the meet.  
Commissioner Sanchez continued his report by stating that he would like to discuss the use of stalls during the State Fair. Due to the need for stalls for the Sheriff's posse and others during the State Fair, racing was unable to accommodate 150 horses. Commissioner Sanchez asked to discuss an alternative plan for the use of stalls for the next State Fair. Commissioner Bitsui asked about the stalls that are used for the Sheriff's posse, do they just need them during the rodeo, not the 17 day race event.  
Commissioner Sanchez stated that the rodeo was within the 17 day race event and the race horses cannot be moved back and forth. They need to be in the same location the whole meet.  
Quarter Horse Championship Race- will be held in October 2019. This race is similar to the Breeders Cup but for Quarter horses. This will be a one day of race meet, with a potential for a \$1 million dollars in purses. This is a great thing for the State Fair, this event will get national coverage.
- ii. **Arena Committee Report:** Commissioner Lee was not present, Chairman Kennedy asked if Dan Mourning had any information to share with the Commission regarding the Arena project at this time. Dan Mourning stated that the Arena Study is still in draft form, Populus is in the process of making changes to the design before the final report is ready. Mr. Mourning added that as soon as the study became final he would share it with the commission and ask for their feedback before it goes to the public.  
Commissioner Sanchez stated that he has gotten very positive feedback when he mentions the project in the community.  
Commissioner Jurado asked if Mr. Mourning had a time frame for the final report. Mr. Mourning stated that he thought the final report would be ready before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year.
- iii. **Committee Suggestions:**  
None at this time.

## State Fair Management Report

### A. 2018 State Fair Report:

Mr. Mourning began his report by stating that the 2018 New Mexico State Fair had been a great fair. Mr. Mourning added that it had been a great year all around for Expo NM. Mr. Mourning added that before he continued with his State Fair management report, he wanted to acknowledge the team of people who make the annual State Fair happen and the dedicated staff that work hard all year round to make the Expo NM year round events such a success.

Mr. Mourning introduced members of the Expo NM/State Fair staff who were in attendance, he began with Susan Rebman, Bank Manager. Susan has been at the Fair for a long time and has had many duties. She is a very dedicated member of the staff and works many hours to make sure the revenue coming in is accounted for and correct.

Mr. Mourning then introduced staff from the operations department. He began with Cindy Cravens, Operations management. Cindy has been at the Fair longer than most and has seen and done many

jobs. She is a valuable member of the operations department, directing the entire operations crew to their assignments and projects. She works closely with Luis Perches, Operations Manager.

Mr. Mourning stated that Luis started as a carpenter and has worked his way up to Operations Manager through hard work and dedication to the State Fair. What they accomplish as a team is unbelievable with the resources they have.

Mr. Mourning then introduced several other members of the operations crew who have been at the Fair for many years. Santos Garcia, is a great welder who can do more than most with the resources available. Albert Chavez, Grounds supervisor, has been at the Fair about 30 + years. Albert's team maintains the grounds, they do an outstanding job. Along with Albert, Connie Elmore and her team make the grounds look good with the many plants that she gets sponsored every year. She is also involved in the Keep NM Beautiful and Blooming Gardeners organizations. Rigo Ibuado, Lead Plumber works tirelessly and makes everything works within the challenges of our existing infrastructure.

Mr. Mourning introduced members of the Events department starting with JR LaBerge- Esparza, Booking Manager and Spectacular coordinator during the State Fair. Although JR is new to the staff he has brought a new energy to the position of booking manager, working tirelessly to improve the existing processes and bring new ideas and events to Expo NM.

Sabrina Garza, Events Manager has been at the Fair since her internship with Barbara Hubbard through her studies at New Mexico State University. Sabrina has learned so much at the Fair and has also developed her own style and ability. She has built many strong and lasting relationships in the entertainment industry. She is instrumental in making the rodeo and concerts during the State Fair a huge success. Sabrina also coordinates with all of the Tingley contractors during Fair and year round. Boye Ladd, Event Coordinator. Boye was the coordinator for the Indian Village during the Fair and does an amazing job, creating a welcoming environment. He is also one of the top year round coordinators, helping staff to understand how to make the Gathering of Nations event a great success.

Ryan Lucero joined the staff to coordinate all of the spectaculars here during the State Fair. This was his first year at Fair and he did such a great job, it felt like he had been doing the job for years. Ryan also fills in as coordinator for year round events as needed.

Next Mr. Mourning introduced Alison Haxton, Event Coordinator. Mr. Mourning stated that anything to do with horses, Alison is the expert. Alison works well with all the Horse events during the State Fair and year round, coordinating all the aspects of the shows.

Darlene Telles, Office Manager and Event Coordinator, Darlene manages all event contracts year round and was the Coordinator for Villa Hispana during Fair. Darlene did a great job as coordinator of Villa Hispana, bringing in great entertainment and coordinating all of the events held in Villa Hispana including the Out at the Fair event and Hispanic Heritage Day.

Mr. Mourning introduced Cesar Colunga who is the coordinator for the Sensory Station during the State Fair. Cesar works tirelessly to make the Sensory Station the best it can be. Cesar also fills in as a coordinator year round events as needed.

Mr. Mourning then introduced James Lewis who helps coordinate all of the events held in the African American Performing Arts Center building (AAPAC) year round, and is the coordinator in the African American Pavilion (AAP) during the State Fair. James does a great job coordinating all of the entertainment and activities held in AAP during the State Fair. Mr. Mourning also introduced Diane Hunter who along with James, works hard to help maintain AAPAC building year round.

Mr. Mourning then introduced Dupuy Bateman, Consultant. Mr. Bateman worked with closely with Dan when he first started as General Manager in 2011 to help him get the State Fair back on track. Mr. Bateman was initially hired to perform an audit of Expo NM/State Fair. After the audit was completed Mr. Bateman stayed on to help create a business plan for Expo NM/State Fair to move forward. Mr. Bateman has been involved in the Fair ever since and has been an integral part of the success of Expo NM/State Fair.

Mr. Mourning then introduced staff in the Media/marketing department. First, he introduced Wyndham Kemsley, PIO who is new to Expo NM/State Fair. Wyndham had a steep learning curve when he first began, but hung in and worked hard during State Fair. Second, he introduced Chris Belantoni, Social Media coordinator, who is also new to Expo NM/State Fair. Chris brought new, exciting ideas for enhancing the social media presence of the Fair. Chris is a great asset to media team. Mr. Mourning introduced the final member of the Media/marketing team, Oona Gonzales, Marketing Manager. Oona has been tireless in what she does, coordinating all media contracts, media sponsorships, ticketing, and media buys. The media presence during this State Fair has been fantastic due to her hard work and dedication.

Mr. Mourning then introduced Michele Clement, Purchasing department. Michele used to be the sponsorship coordinator and after a short time at the Arizona State Fair returned to New Mexico and joined the purchasing team to help with contracts and other projects. Michele also helps coordinate commission meetings and worked at the State Fair store during the State Fair.

Mr. Mourning then took the time to introduce Ken Salazar, Deputy Manager, who has been at the Fair for many years. Ken is the person on staff who knows Expo NM/ The State Fairgrounds the best. Mr. Salazar does unbelievable work, he is always on hand to find a way to make projects happen and improve the grounds and the events for all staff and clients. Mr. Mourning also introduced, Bill Nordin, CFO. As well as being the CFO, Bill manages the Parking department. Bill also interacts with clients, tenants and other contractors on behalf of Expo NM/State Fair. Mr. Nordin brings a strong background in Finance to his position from his many years in the banking industry.

Mr. Mourning finished his introductions with Joseph Holloway, Legal Counsel. Mr. Holloway is also the Legal Counsel for the Livestock Board. Joseph works well with Mr. Mourning to navigate legal issues and represent Expo NM/ State Fair. He has been a great addition to the team.

Mr. Mourning then thanked all of the staff personally for all of their hard work and dedication to Expo/NM and The State Fair. Mr. Mourning thanked the commissioners for allowing him the time to introduce and thank members of the staff at the commission meeting, it was something he had wanted to do for a long time.

Chairman Kennedy added that before the staff left the commission meeting and went back to work, he wanted to say that he has watched so many of the staff grow into their jobs, take ownership and show how much they care about the work they do. He also wanted to thank everyone for all of their hard work and dedication. Commissioner Jurado, Commission Sanchez and Commissioner Bitsui also thanked the staff for their hard work.

Mr. Mourning began his State Fair Management report with an overview of the 2018 New Mexico State Fair. Some statistics of note include:

- 2018 Fair had been a record year for attendance – 504,445 people attended the 80<sup>th</sup> celebration of the New Mexico State Fair. This is the highest attendance for the 11 day format. Mr. Mourning added that great weather and a strong recovery of New Mexico's economy are attributed to a banner year for the fair.
- The New Mexico State Fair has maintained our #2 ranking as one of the best fairs in the country by SmartAsset.com. This ranking is directly related to the programming we provide and the value of that programming.
- In early August, we were also ranked as the third most affordable fair in the nation by HometoGo.com. The ranking was based on the cost of admission, the cost of a corn dog, and room rates in the city for a single night's stay in Albuquerque.

Mr. Mourning added that we had visitors from five other fairs, including the Colorado State Fair to see how and what we are doing during our annual event because of the above rankings. We have become an example of what can and should be done.

Mr. Mourning continued his report by stating that fairgoers were able to fill out an online survey during their visit to the Fair, he then shared some results from that survey:

- Visitors gave their overall fair experience a rating of 4.5 out of 5. Factors such as the variety of vendors, quality of food options offered, family friendliness, and cleanliness were also rated favorably (4 out of 5).
- 59% of attendees live within 20 miles of The State Fair grounds.
- 15% of this year's attendees were first-time visitors, with a majority of them stating they will be back.
- 72% of attendees rated the price of admission as reasonable compared to other recently attended fairs and festivals.
- Many fairgoers enjoyed the fair at least two different days during the 11-day event.
- 25% of fairgoers would like to see some type of Farmer's Market at the Fair.
- Concerts and shows that fairgoers would most like to see inside Tingley Coliseum are
  - Country- classic country more than new country acts
  - Rock & Roll (Classic) acts
  - Comedy Shows

Mr. Mourning added that the comedy shows were a surprise, and the staff is already looking into possible family-friendly comedy acts for next year's event.

Mr. Mourning then continued his report by sharing some positive trends from the 2018 Fair:

- There was a **3%** increase in concession and vendor rental revenues over previous years' fair.
- **3,939** cases of Marble's New Mexico State Fair Pale Ale were sold, which is a 12% increase from 2017. ABQ Metro: 51% of total sales volume vs. 58% last year, suggesting better statewide reach in 2018.
- The Fair received **22,755** competitive entries by the Arts, Home and Creative Arts, Flower Arts, and School Arts departments. This is a 21% increase from last year.
- **15,136** students and teachers participated in this year's School Days program, which is a 12% increase over 2017.
- We had **4,640** visitors to the State Fair Sensory Station, a 13% increase from our 2017 inaugural initiative of this award-winning space aimed at providing a more enjoyable and inclusive experience for our special needs kids and guests.

Mr. Mourning stated that Rodeo attendance was up this year and attributed that to the great teaming of Doug Mathis, rodeo announcer and Dustin Murray, stock contractor. The addition of these two professionals resulted in an outstanding Rodeo. Mr. Mourning added that 430 of the world's top cowboys competed for a total payoff of \$165,845 in this year's New Mexico State Fair Rodeo.

Mr. Mourning also stated that Matt Tarr, Rodeo Clown and his wife Stacey did a fantastic job building awareness on social media with interviews with the cowboys, and Facebook Live videos of rodeo events. They also went on several visits to local hospitals with the cowboys and the New Mexico State Fair Queen, which were again very well received. Stacey's posts were beneficial in reaching a targeted rodeo demographic.

Mr. Mourning stated that Dustin Lynch and Dan + Shay gave two phenomenal performances to sell-out crowds. The Rodeo/Concert series was a great success.

Mr. Mourning shared with the commission some new Initiatives that had taken place during the 2018 State Fair. First, the City of Albuquerque Park & Ride program, which was very successful because of the positive partnership and participation from the city's new administration. As well as the Park & Ride program, UBER/Lift drop off location and the Bike Valet area continue to be highly utilized and favorable solutions during high traffic days. Mr. Mourning stated that MegaPass sales were a great success. The sales were taken in-house this year with the assistance of Saffire Ticketing and performed better than last year's sales at statewide Walgreens sales. Mr. Mourning added that the total number of online tickets sold, 19,096 could be broken down as follows:

- Online Mega Pass Sales: 9,039
- Online General Admission Sales 10,057

Mr. Mourning stated that during the 2018 State Fair, staff created a New Mexico State Fair Store with New Mexico State Fair merchandise as well as sundries and refreshments. The Store was a great success, bringing in an additional \$20,000 in revenue. The State Fair Store was a homerun and staff is already looking into new merchandise for next year.

Mr. Mourning continued his report with an overview of the Junior Livestock Sale. Mr. Shane Hall, who was the Auctioneer at previous New Mexico State Fair Junior Livestock Sales was hired to coordinate the Sale and he did an outstanding job. There were 2,315 animals on exhibit during this year's fair. The Junior Livestock Sale generated \$540,000 in revenue for New Mexico 4H and FFA participants from all across the state, The Grand Champion Steer was raised in Santa Fe County and purchased by a group of buyers that included Farm Credit, Wells Fargo, and others. It was purchased for \$30,000 in the name of one of the auction's biggest supporters, Jennifer Riordan. Jennifer was killed in a terrible airline accident earlier this year. She was a great champion of the auction and admirer of all of the hard work and dedication that programs like 4H and FFA fostered in New Mexico students.

Mr. Mourning added that the FFA and 4H kids in New Mexico are wonderful, hardworking youth who are the future of New Mexico. The State Fair is proud to work with them and acknowledge their hard work.

Mr. Mourning then stated that there were a few new fun agricultural exhibits during the 2018 New Mexico State Fair. One was the "Ham Cam", live feed set up watch a sow giving birth. There was also live feed into the chicken hatchery in the Red Barn. These exhibits along with exhibits like Sheep-to-Shawl are meant to be educational and entertaining.

Mr. Mourning gave the commission an overview of the Sponsorship department for the 2018 New Mexico State Fair. The sponsorship department generated over \$1.1 million in cash and in-kind sponsorships this year. This included 800 hotel rooms provided by our hotel sponsors. It also included 12 new sponsors including Cabela's, AETNA, Big R, Donut Mart, Chevrolet, and Village Mercantile. Once again proving that having a presence at the New Mexico State Fair is still a great business investment.

Mr. Mourning added that Reithhoffer Shows also felt that Expo NM/The State Fair is a great investment. Reithhoffer Shows invested \$1.3 million dollars to have the Ski Lift Sky Ride in time for the 2018 State Fair. This is a permanent ride which will be utilized year round at other large events such as The Gathering of Nations and Pride Fest, generating revenue year round.

Mr. Mourning went on to report on the Media Coverage during the 2018 New Mexico State Fair. Mr. Mourning stated that the coverage of the fair was overwhelmingly positive. The requests for stories and interviews were coming in daily and many of our local media outlets provided a big presence on the fairgrounds during the annual event. The number of live shots from the fair was up dramatically, KOAT, the market's top rated newscast spent the entire day on Main Street on Monday. Shelly Ribando did live hits and live segments from the Sky Ride, Indian Village, the Green Chile Cheeseburger Challenge, Midway, and from inside the Unique Foods Contest Winner's booth, Quesada's. Byron Morton's weather segment was done live from the food court, along with two interviews with creators of two of the most unique food items at this year's fair – Kamakazi Food Truck's Green Chile Enchilada Egg Roll, and Exotic Funnel Cakes' Pineapple Upside Down Funnel Cake. KOB's partnership with the Air Force Research Laboratory on Science & Tech Day was a huge success. The Air Force brought out a stellar display and KOB did a total of 4 live hits, including their weather segments during the hour-long Noon newscast. KOB was also a great School Days partner, some of the on air talent came and read to the kids in the Farm.

Mr. Mourning stated that the Navy Band played during the Green Chili Cheeseburger Challenge, adding to the atmosphere and making the contest even more fun. The Oso Grille in Capitan, deserved the first prize win and Mr. Mourning encouraged anyone who was in the area to go and taste their food for themselves. Mr. Mourning also told the commission about a new program which involved many of the food vendors during the 2018 Fair. The program, called "Graze Days" featured \$3 samplers of the vendors' food on each Thursday of the fair. This allowed fairgoers to sample all of the different and unique food options for an affordable price.

Mr. Mourning stated that this concluded his 2018 State Fair report and added that he can't wait for the 2019 New Mexico State Fair. He was looking forward to improving on the 2018 New Mexico State Fair, making the annual event bigger and better each year. Mr. Mourning added that the staff is already working on entertainment for 2019.

Mr. Mourning then stated that he wanted to take this time to thank the commissioners for all of their hard work and support of him as General Manager. The support from the commission has been instrumental in allowing him to make the New Mexico State Fair the 2<sup>nd</sup> best Fair in the country.

Mr. Mourning continued his State Fair management report with an overview of the year round events happening at Expo NM.

#### **B. EXPO NM Report:**

Mr. Mourning reviewed for the commission, the current and future EXPO NM Events:

- **Dragon Lights** will be back at Expo NM from October 5, 2018 through December 2, 2018. The show will feature a brand new light display with stage shows every night. This is the third largest event held on the each year.
- **Dragon's Haunted House** will be at Expo NM once again October 4, 2018 through November 3, 2018.
- **Legacy Boxing** will be returning December 1, 2018 to the Lujan Complex for their upcoming boxing matches.
- **UFC-** has contacted Expo NM for available 2019 dates.
- **Kicker Arena Cross** will be in Tingley Coliseum on December 1, 2018. They are a new promoter to the facility out of Tulsa, OK.

- **Banda MS (PRONOUNCED “bon-da emeh eseh)** will be at Expo NM on December 8, 2018. They are a 16 member band from Mazatlan, Mexico. Bobby Dee Presents, out of California, is the promoter who is also new to our facility. Tickets are available through UNMTickets.com
- **Disturbed** will be kicking off the New Year in Tingley Coliseum. Live Nation will be bringing them on January 1, 2019. This tour is in support of their just released Evolution album. Tickets will be available at Ticketmaster.com or LiveNation.com
- **Thomas Rhett**- will be coming to Tingley Coliseum on September 29, 2019.
- **Supernationals** will be returning this January 2019. The event will be a week earlier than in years past. January 24-27, 2019.
- Kicking off our busy season will be **Spirit of Hope in Tingley** and **NAGA (North American Grappling Association – Brazilian Jiu-jitsu)** in Lujan. This all happens the first weekend in February 2019.
- We then move to **Shrine Circus** (February 8 -10, 2019) and **Panic! At The Disco** (February 12, 2019) both in Tingley Coliseum. Tickets for Panic! At The Disco are available on AXS.com
- **Feld Motorsports** has moved their **Monster Jam Event** to March 2019.

Mr. Mourning stated that Expo NM will be very busy in 2019 and that is due to the hard work of the staff and the positive feedback from many promoters who are seeing Expo NM as a great place to have their events.

Mr. Mourning continued his Expo NM report with news about the proposed updates and additions to the Flea Market. The plan includes continued improvements to the footprint of the Flea Market, staff is currently working on a plan to repair divots and cracks in the paving in the Flea Market, along with improving foot traffic in the market. They are also looking at adding shade structures, a Farmer’s Market, and live entertainment, as well as re-instating jewelry row, and creating an antique furniture area.

In conclusion, Mr. Mourning wanted to share with the commission a collaborative initiative that happened just recently on the fairgrounds. Mr. Mourning explained that a semi-truck carrying over 90 heads of cattle rolled over on the eastbound I-40 flyover, trapping the animals inside the trailer. Through a coordinated effort with the Livestock Board and EXPO New Mexico, the cattle were safely rescued from the scene and safely delivered to the fairgrounds before being transported to their original destination. We are more often than not the only facility equipped to receive large numbers of large breed animals and our staff is one very few with the experience to set in place the safeguards necessary to receive, care, and house animals when situations like these arise. This was a highly coordinated and highly successful rescue effort. This is a part of our mission to serve and collaborate with the community.

Dan Mourning opened up the floor for questions and comments.

Commissioner Sanchez stated that Mr. Mourning and his team had done a great job.

Commissioner Bitsui wanted to know how many of the “buttons” handed out during the Parade come back. Dan Mourning stated that 5000 buttons were handed out but he did not know how many were returned. He stated that he would get that number to her and the other commissioners as soon as possible. Mr. Mourning then added that because of a great idea from his staff, there had been a very



positive change to parade for the 2018. Traditionally the Parade traveled east on Central, for the 2018 State Fair the parade instead went west on Central. This new route was great for the vendors in the Nob Hill area, there were about 50,000 people on parade route.

Chairman Kennedy stated that the 2018 New Mexico State Fair was awesome and it has been great to see the growth and improvement over the years. Chairman Kennedy added that the staff is amazing and it shows. Chairman Kennedy stated that he has been honored to have been a part of it.

**Discussion of Meeting Calendar:**

Chairman Kennedy stated that the next meeting of the New Mexico State Fair Commission by statute is held the first Monday in January, which is January 8, 2019. Chairman Kennedy asked that Oona Gonzales assist with the coordination of the next meeting date.

**Discussion of agenda items for next meeting:**

Chairman Kennedy stated that if the commissioners had any agenda items that they would like to address at the next commission meeting to please let him know.

**Adjournment:**

Chairman Kennedy called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Sanchez made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Bitsui, with all present voting in favor. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:27 p.m.