

**New Mexico State Fair Commission Minutes  
Of the Regular Commission Meeting  
Wednesday, May 11, 2018  
African American Performing Arts Center  
300 San Pedro, NE  
New Mexico State Fairgrounds  
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at approximately 11:02 a.m.

**Commission Roll Call:**

Commissioners present:  
Chairman, Larry Kennedy  
Secretary-Treasurer, David "Hossie" Sanchez  
Commissioner William Lee  
Commissioner Xavier Jurado  
Commissioner Ruth Bitsui

**Pledge of Allegiance:** led by Adam Feldman

**Introduction of Guests:**

Bill Nordin  
Ken Salazar  
Adam Feldman  
Oona Gonzales  
Sabrina Garza

General Manager Dan Mourning welcomed new State Fair Commissioner, Ruth Bitsui to the Fair and expressed enthusiasm for working with Commissioner Bitsui in the coming months and throughout the 2018 State Fair season.

General Manager Dan Mourning also introduced the New Mexico State Fair's new rodeo stock contractor, Mr. Dustin Murray of HiLo Pro Rodeo. Mr. Murray provided a brief background of his company, HiLo Pro Rodeo as the fastest growing company in the United States. Mr. Murray is originally from Corrales, NM and has a personal tie to New Mexico having participated in many rodeo events as teenager and young adult inside Tingley Coliseum. He thanked the New Mexico State Fair and expressed enthusiasm for working with the Fair and continuing the tradition of the New Mexico State Fair Rodeo as a premier sporting event.

Chairman Larry Kennedy also welcomed Commissioner Ruth Bitsui and she went on to thank him and the rest of the Commission for welcoming her. She also congratulated Mr. Mourning and the Expo New Mexico staff for doing an excellent job on producing the State Fair and the on-going improvements to the Expo New Mexico grounds.

**Action Item: Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Sanchez made a motion for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lee, with all members voting in the affirmative.

**Action Item: Approval of Minutes of January 8, 2018 Regular Meeting**

Commissioner Lee made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2018 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sanchez. Chairman Kennedy asked if all were in favor of the minutes, all voted in the affirmative.

**Public Comment:** None at this time

**Chairman's Agenda:**

**A. Committee Reports:**

- 1) **Racing Committee Report:** Commissioner Sanchez stated that the State Fair meet was a great success and everyone is talking about it because the purses are higher and we are getting the best horses. This has been the goal the whole time and so far everything is looking good. Commissioner Sanchez added that the staff at the Downs Racetrack are working hard to keep the facility in good working order. Mr. Mourning stated that he agrees with Commissioner Sanchez, and extended kudos to the staff at the Downs, especially the work they have done on the grandstands. Chairman Kennedy stated that night racing is still going strong, there were a lot of people in attendance during the evening he attended the races. Chairman Kennedy added that he appreciates Commissioner Sanchez' leadership on the Racing Commission. Commissioner Sanchez stated that the goal had been to get back to the premier racing meet in the State and that they are on the right track to meet that goal. Dan Mourning added the success that is happening now goes back to the negotiation of a better lease so that the Downs had a better business model to work from. He added kudos to Commissioner Sanchez for the great partnership with the Downs.
  
- 2) **Arena Committee Report:** Commissioner Lee stated that two draft proposals had been received for discussion and review. Commissioner Lee added that he was encouraged by the proposals. Commissioner Lee continued by saying that the committee will continue to work through the process. He would like to see it done sooner than later, the preliminary reports indicate that now is the time to get this project done. Commissioner Lee added that he felt a new arena will benefit year round revenue streams that we are missing out on right now. Dan Mourning added that he is encouraged to see that an independent company has reached out to the community to get their input. The ultimate goal is to build the facility on the fairgrounds. Chairman Kennedy added that now is the time for this type of facility and added that he appreciates all of the hard work Commissioner Lee and Dan Mourning have already done on this project. Commissioner Lee added that he would like to encourage the other commissioners to keep the conversation going and to voice their support for this project where and when they have the opportunity. Dan Mourning stated that he anticipates that this will be a very cooperative project.
  
- 3) **Committee suggestions:** Chairman Kennedy stated that suggestions for committees is an option always open to the commissioners and asked the commissioners to let him know of any committee ideas.

**State Fair Management Report:**

**A. EXPO New Mexico Report:**

General Manager Dan Mourning began his report by thanking the commissioners for their continued support of the staff and vision of the Expo NM and the State Fair. Expo NM year-round events are going great, this has been the busiest winter season that he has ever seen.

Returning events

Chinese Lantern Festival – They had a very successful run at Expo NM and are coming back bigger and better and staff is working on a multiple year deal.

Gathering of Nations will return in April 2018 with a bigger program

Monster Jam, Shrine Circus, Super Nationals, KOB Health Fair, Pride Fest, Southwest Chocolate and Coffee are all returning in 2018.

We will again have multiple Roller Derby events and horse shows, along with beer and wine festivals as well.

Outdoor concerts in Villa Hispana

Modest Mouse Concert

Phantogram & TYCHO Concert

New events

Tractor Pulls- we are hoping to book this type of event in 2018.

Central NM Science and Engineering Challenge will be held in the Lujan building in March. This event moved from UNM Johnson Center due to construction and we are hoping to keep them at Expo NM for the multiple years.

Flea Market

Staff is working on revamping the footprint of the flea market which includes plans to use the new stoplight on Central due to ART Project in the new footprint. The media department is working with Ken Salazar and Gabe Garcia on new signage and a new media campaign for the flea market as well.

Infrastructure/Improvements

We are pursuing updates to our security cameras campus wide to provide a safer environment for our employees and guests. We are working with representatives from homeland security and state police to make sure we meet the new safety and security challenges we face each day. We are also working with Bernalillo County 4H Building Corporation on improvements they have agreed to do in the Dairy Barn. We will have a Memorandum of Understanding to outline the improvements that will be done by this organization.

There are ongoing electrical updates around the grounds and the restrooms in the Lujan Building have received a much needed renovation.

Future issues:

The Medical cannabis issue will need to be discussed for the future. The medical cannabis issue could become a retail cannabis issue. Mr. Mourning is discussing with other folks who have already had to address this issue at their Fairs and will continue the conversation with them to address any changes that may happen in New Mexico.

**B. Upcoming 2018 New Mexico State Fair:**

Entertainment

Mr. Mourning and staff attended the IAFE conference in Las Vegas in December to look at entertainment for the 2018 Rodeo/Concert series. We are partnering again with Barbara

Hubbard once again to create the best line-up possible. We have offers on some exciting headliner acts like Little Big Town and DNCE.

#### Spectaculars

Staff is also working on our programming once again and we have many of our Spectaculars returning such as the Petting Zoo, Drum Corps, Deming Duck Races and Pig Races to name a few. Some new spectaculars that we are looking at booking are Go- karts and a lumber jack show. We will also have the Karaoke contest back on the Main stage. The staff will continue to work on these spectaculars to bring the best entertainment for our guests.

#### Concessions

We are looking to bring new food vendors once again. The Fair is getting many vendors contacting us to be a part of our Annual Event, which has created a waiting list for vendors. Mr. Mourning attributes the increased interested from vendors to our ranking of the 2<sup>nd</sup> best Fair in the country

#### Western Fair Association

Mr. Mourning and other staff attended the Western Fairs Association (WFA) conference in January. Expo NM/NM State Fair submitted an entry to be considered for the annual Merrill Award which is awarded at the WFA conference each year. The criteria for each entry requires the organize to demonstrate innovation, vision and excellence. The NM State Fair won this award for our new Sensory Station at the 2017 Annual Event. The Sensory Station was a collaborative effort with the NM Autism Society and other local groups to provide a space for those fairgoers and their families who need a quiet space to decompress. The Sensory Station was very well received by our fairgoers and we appreciate the recognition of our efforts by the WFA. Mr. Mourning added that he is very proud of the staff at the NM State Fair because they are always working to find areas that are not being addressed and then create a program to address that need. The NM State Fair staff will work on enhancing the Sensory Station area for the 2018 Annual Event to make it even better.

Commissioner Sanchez wanted to let Mr. Mourning and his staff know that he had known Sarah Baca, Director of the NM Autism Society and her family for a long time and she had rave reviews about how wonderful the staff at the Fair was and how great the new program was. She could not thank everyone enough for all of their hard work.

Mr. Mourning stated that he wanted to thank Sarah Baca and her crew and the many other volunteers who rolled up their sleeves and got to work to make this program the great success it turned out to be. He also acknowledged the State Fair staff for all of their hard work as well.

#### Media/Marketing:

2018 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fair. The media/marketing team is working on designing an 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo and are starting earlier than before on an advertising campaign for the Fair which will feature our 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Expo NM will be working with the City of Albuquerque to utilize the bus wraps to advertise the events going on at Expo NM and the upcoming Annual Event.

Mr. Mourning stated that we are now one of the top nationally recognized Fairs in the industry. We had representatives from five other Fairs visit us to see what and how we are doing things.

He added that he had gotten many compliments about our staff during the Fair with regard to how well trained and informed they seemed to be. Our visitors noticed how courteous everyone was from the staff who clean up to the state police on the grounds. Mr. Mourning stated that he attributed the great customer service to outstanding leadership in the Operation department and the outstanding training provided to all new staff that come on board for the Annual Event.

Mr. Mourning opened the floor for question and comments at this time.

Commissioner Lee stated that he would like to extend his thanks to the entire team, management and staff, for making it possible for the NM State Fair to receive the Merrill Award. He knows the staff does not work so hard for awards or financial gain, he understands it is a labor of love in many cases.

Commissioner Sanchez added that he knows that everything starts at the top, and that is Dan Mourning. Commissioner Sanchez stated that this is a very important message and he appreciates the leadership that Mr. Mourning provides.

Chairman Kennedy added that he also sees the passion that Mr. Mourning brings to the Fair and he is proud to have been a part of all of the positive changes that have been made during his time at the Fair.

Dan Mourning thanked the commissioners for their kind words for himself and his staff. He then added that Ken Salazar, who has been here for many years in many different positions and has a full understanding of how things work at Expo NM, has been promoted to Deputy Manager of the Fair. This is a well deserved promotion.

**C. Legislative Update:**

There is \$250 million in capital money available during this legislative session. We are hoping to be in line for some of that money. The extra money would be very beneficial to our mission and Mr. Mourning added that he believes that the state fair does a better job of using that money, we do more with less and make sure all of the projects are done the right way.

**Discussion of meeting calendar:** Chairman Kennedy stated that the commission held quarterly meetings and that meant that the next meeting would be in April. Michele Clement will communicate with the commissioners to see which date will work best.

**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 meeting to let him know.

**Adjournment:** Chairman Kennedy asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Sanchez made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Commissioner Jurado with all present voting in favor. Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:01 p.m.