



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2021 BIG FRESNO FAIR SUCCESSFULLY RETURNED TO AN IN-PERSON EVENT COMPLETE WITH FAVORITE FAIR TRADITIONS, NEW ATTRACTIONS AND PLENTY OF SMILES AND MEMORIES**

*Extensive collaboration with health and safety partners made it the safest event possible*

**Fresno, CA...October 20, 2021...** The Big Fresno Fair's Board of Directors, Management and staff are elated to announce the successful completion of the 2021 Big Fresno Fair, which ran October 6 -17, and marked its return to an in-person event after pivoting in 2020 to a drive-thru Fair. During the 2021 12-day run of the Fair, guests were able to enjoy their favorite traditions like live horse racing, competitive exhibits, carnival rides, delicious Fair food and livestock. Not to mention new attractions like the Food Truck Alley, Livin' Local Marketplace, Pop! Culture Experience, BMX Stunt Show, Mexican Heritage Patio, new neon signs around the Paul Paul Theater (Foster's Freeze, Castillo's and Vista Pharmacy Drug Sign) and the Italian Exhibit in the Fresno County Historical Museum.

"It filled all of us with so much joy and gratitude to see our Fairgrounds come back to life. To see families and friends out together and having fun. To hear laughter and music fill the air – to see the smiles on faces as we walked through the grounds. That is what it's all about and why we worked so hard to survive the past year and come back with a family-friendly, safe event for our community to enjoy," said Stacy Rianda, Deputy Manager II, The Big Fresno Fair.

As the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Fair in the State of California, and the largest annual event in the Central Valley – there was immense focus put on the health and safety measures to provide the community the safest event possible to enjoy. As with every year, the Fair worked year-round with a variety of State, County, City and private agencies to comply with and exceed the health and safety requirements set forth by the State of California, County of Fresno and City of Fresno. This year enhanced measures were taken with COVID-19, including mask requirements, health screenings, enhanced sanitization measures, increased hand washing stations and educational outreach on what Fairgoers can do to enjoy public events safety.

"We are grateful for our incredible relationship with all our health and safety partners, and wouldn't open the gates without them. We are especially grateful for our highly-involved relationship with the Fresno County Department of Public Health as we collaborated extensively on plans to bring this annual tradition back to an in-person event for our community," said Lauri King, Deputy Manager II, The Big Fresno Fair.

Despite uncharacteristic winds on Monday, October 11, which forced the cancellation of horse racing and grounded some of the Fair's carnival rides – as well as a last-minute cancellation of the Fair's top-selling concert, Midland, due to a positive COVID-19 test among their crew – the Fair was a resounding success.

Here's a look at the numbers:

- The 2021 Big Fresno Fair welcomed 591,921 people during its 12-day run; compared to 632,590 people in 2019, when the Fair was a 13-day event due to Columbus Day. In comparing 12 days to 12 days, the Fair is actually up in attendance by 1.01%.





- Racing fans showed up big to enjoy the return of live horse racing. On-track handle was down only slightly (0.81%) compared to 2019. However, 2019 numbers are based on nine days of live horse racing, compared to only six days at the 2021 Big Fresno Fair race meet. During the six days of live horse racing there were 50 races ran with an average of six horses per race. There were zero injuries among the equine athletes and jockeys, largely attributed to the quality of the track surface.
- The Livestock Pavilion was filled with lots of activity during the 12-day Fair! A total of 818 exhibitors from 26 different 4-H and FFA groups came out to show their animal projects. During the two phases of the Jr. Livestock Auction, as well as the Dairy Replacement Heifer Sale a total of 635 animals were sold, generating \$944,616.43. This figure does not include add-on bids, which continue to come in; with those total sales for this year will be over \$1 million.
- Fairgoers definitely came out to enjoy their Fair food this year, contributing to a 3.94% increase in sales over 2019.
- The Fair hired 545 people to help put on the 12-day event, not including those hired by the carnival and the individual food stands.
- This year, 6,487 pints of blood were collected at the “Pint for a Pass” Blood Drive held September 15 – October 16 in partnership with the Central California Blood Center. This brings the program’s 11-year total to more than 97,000 pints of blood collected, which had the potential to save up to 291,000 lives.
- \$87,000 in scholarships were given out to Fresno County 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students as part of the Fair’s 4.0 & Above Program held in partnership with the Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools along with valued sponsors Friends of the Big Fresno Fair, EECU, Toyota, Chevron and iHeart Radio. Plus, Joanna Mendez, a 12<sup>th</sup> grader from Sunnyside High School won a brand new 2022 Toyota Corolla; a \$19,600 value!
- \$13,000 in cash prizes were given out at the Fair’s Big Band Review participants. Washington Union High School and Clarke Intermediate walked away with top honors as the sweepstakes winners!
- Lastly, with The Big Fresno Fair resuming normal in-person operations – so does its \$77.1 million economic impact on Fresno County.

Whether it was the new attractions, competitive exhibits, free entertainment, live horse racing, carnival rides, Table Mountain Rancheria Park, Fair food or concerts that brought people out, there was no doubt that the community sure missed their Big Fresno Fair and was happy to see it return. Many families continue to choose to stay local for their entertainment and the Fair provided them a family-friendly, affordable and safe entertainment option. Planning is already underway for the 2022 Big Fresno Fair, which will run October 5-16 and marks the 138<sup>th</sup> year of this valued tradition.

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