



For Immediate Release

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## The New Mexico State Fair Works to Promote Inclusion at This Year's Event

New Mexico State Fair officials continue to build on initiatives that are geared towards including New Mexicans from all walks of life at this year's event. Ongoing initiatives like the Sensory Station, and events like the Exceptional Rodeo and "Out at the Fair," are aimed at bringing all New Mexicans together to celebrate their state.

The New Mexico State Fair is proud to bring the Sensory Station back to this year's event. The Sensory Station made its debut during the 2017 New Mexico State Fair and was awarded the prestigious Merrill Award by the Western Fairs Association earlier this year. The Sensory Station provides a safe space for special needs and sensory sensitive guests to de-escalate and provides low-key sensory input activities while attending and participating in fair activities. The New Mexico State Fair has been recognized as a leader in the fair industry for this innovative, community based program and plans to host several representatives from other state fairs planning to replicate a similar space at their events.

"We realized last year that there was a part of our community that was unable to come out and enjoy the fair as a family due to the sensory stimulating environment of the event," said General Manager, Dan Mourning. "The Sensory Station is a game changer for families and individuals with special needs and sensory sensitivities. The fair is about bringing families and people together to create memories that will last a lifetime and the accommodations provided by the Sensory Station allow these families to come out and do just that."

The Exceptional Rodeo is also returning this year, which focuses specifically on children with special needs. This rodeo gives special needs kids the opportunity to ride horses, participate in scaled down rodeo events, and meet cowboys and cowgirls face to face. The Exceptional Rodeo will take place inside Tingley Coliseum on Wednesday, September 12, at 5:45 pm.

Finally, for the first time in New Mexico, the 2018 New Mexico State Fair is hosting "Out at the Fair" at Villa Hispana on September 9. This all-day event, based out of San Diego, is meant to provide a welcoming environment for members of the LGBTQ community for a full day of entertainment, activities, prizes and more for the whole family. Out at the Fair has been featured at multiple fairs, state and county, across California for the past 7 years, and is making its out-of-state debut at this year's New Mexico State Fair.

"The New Mexico State Fair is a place for everyone to enjoy and feel safe and welcomed," stated Mourning. "We are proud of the steps we have taken to ensure that all New Mexicans are included in this spectacular event and we will continue to ensure that the State Fair is a friendly and welcoming experience to everyone across our great state."

The New Mexico State Fair runs from September 6<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. For more information visit [www.exponm.com](http://www.exponm.com).