



## IAFE CyberSeminar Series

### Competitive Exhibits Programming (IFM #131)

Presented by Jessie McLaughlin, CFE, IFMG  
Spokane Interstate Fair, WA



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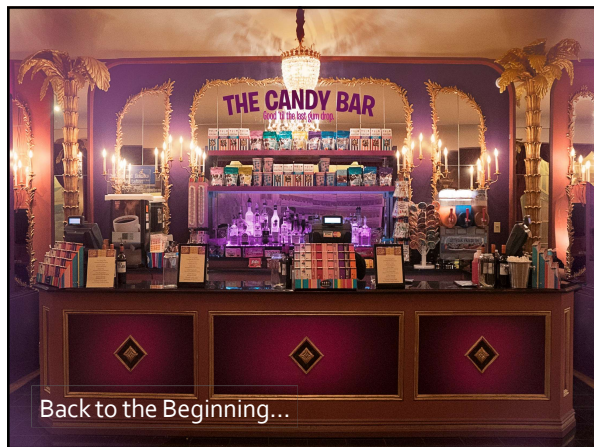
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### Poll Question # 1

What is your involvement with Competitive Exhibits at your Fair?

- A. My primary responsibility
- B. Lots of involvement but have other duties
- C. Little to some involvement
- D. What is a Competitive Exhibit?




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### Definition...

The component of the fair which offers competitions for items -- not livestock.

May include live competitions where the product or item is created on-the-spot for judging.




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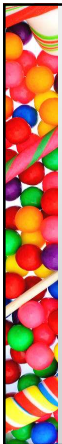
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### HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

- Fairs originated as events centered around trading and harvest – a commercial aspect.
- Often connected with religious ceremonies or sacred dates.
- Agricultural Societies – formed by the elite farmers in England to advance agriculture. Scientific, technical in nature.




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- In 1765, first North American Fair was held (Windsor, Nova Scotia).
- In 1792, Niagara Agricultural Society held a fair in Ontario, Canada.
- Elkanah Watson and The Berkshire Agricultural Society – 1811.
- "Competition" becomes the defining factor.
- The first fair - \$70 in prize money for livestock.




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FIRST ANNUAL FAIR  
OF THE  
Southern Central Agricultural Association.

Stone Mountain, Tuesday Evening, Aug. 10, 1847.  
At a preliminary meeting, this evening, of this Association, Mr. Stocks, of Greene, President, in the chair, the following Committees were appointed to examine the various articles to be exhibited at the Fair to-morrow, and to award premiums upon the same, to wit:

On Stock and Farm Products.—Dr. Whitten, of Hancock; Benjamin H. Warren, of Richmond; W. R. Moss, of Hancock.

On Implements in Mechanics, and Agricultural Implements.—James M. Reynolds, of Burke; George W. L. Twigg, of Richmond; M. W. Warren, of Morgan.

On Domestic Manufactures.—R. S. Hardwick, of Hancock; L. S. Catlin, of Edgfield, S. C.; Robert Y. Harris, of Richmond.

On Flowers, Fruits, Vegetables, &c.—William J. Eyn, of Richmond; Wm. J. Minn, of Richmond; Peter F. Bouschair, of Richmond.

On motion, The Chairmen of the foregoing committees were appointed a Committee of Arrangements.

Wednesday, Aug. 11th, 18 o'clock  
The morning having been spent in the examination of  
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54  
The Committee were so well satisfied with the specimens presented, that they recommended the Executive Committee to award a Silver Goblet worth twenty five dollars to Maj. Coover, for the energy which he has exhibited in manufacturing iron in Georgia.  
The Committee would remark, in conclusion, that more need be done than the South Iron Works for iron of any description.  
Wm. RUTHERFORD, JR.  
Chairman.

ON HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT.  
The Committee on Household Department respectfully submit the following awards and recommendations:  
Mrs. J. V. JONES, Augusta, for best jar of Lard, \$3 00  
Mrs. STEPHENSON, Macon, and Mrs. BROWN, Vio-ville, for dried Figs, ..... 1 00  
Mrs. J. H. KIRKPATRICK, DeKalb County, best dried Peaches and Apples, ..... 2 00  
Mrs. J. V. JONES, for jar of Brandy Peaches, jar of Preserved Quinces, half bottle of Snow Brand-ly, jar of Wild Cash-Jelly.  
Mrs. Dr. AUSTIN, Macon, for jar Georgia Chorkins, jar Apple-Jelly, jar Wild Plum Jelly, jar of Blackberry Jelly, jar Tomato Preserves, jar Quince Preserves, jar Apple Preserves.  
Mrs. J. H. B. WASHINGTON, Macon, jar Orange-Jelly, jar Green Orange Preserves, jar Orange Limes Preserves, two jar Brandy Peaches, Bottle Wal-nut Candy, half bushel dried Peaches.  
The Committee recommend premiums to Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Andrews and Mrs. Washington, for their respective lots of articles above named, making no

55  
distinction between them, except the Brandy Peaches of Mrs. Jones, which they pronounce the "best of kind".  
The Committee recommend the following premiums:  
Mrs. D. E. NEAL, Wetumpka, Alabama, for one jar of carrot citron, very superior, a premium of ..... 2 00  
Mrs. FRANCIS HENRY, Middleville, jar of carred Citron by a servant, very fine, premium, ..... 2 00  
Mrs. S. B. BROWN, Macon, jar of Magnolia Steam Plum premium, ..... 2 00  
Mrs. M. E. WILSON, Milledgeville, jar of Anglica Preserves, very fine, premium, ..... 2 00  
Mrs. R. E. ROBERTS, Baker County, a Bottle of Bee-stone Oil, a very valuable article, and well con- sidered to a premium, ..... 2 00  
Mrs. S. C. BROWN, Baker County, Arrow Root, a superior article, beautifully prepared, deserving a premium, ..... 2 00  
ROBERT COLLINS,  
BENJ. RUTHERFORD,  
MRS. S. BROWN,  
MRS. C. C. PARKER,  
MRS. GARNER.

ON DAIRY AND HONEY.  
The Committee on Dairy and Honey, beg leave to submit the following report:  
TALBOT LATH, Cass County, for best jar of But- ter, ..... Cup \$5 00




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### Competitive Exhibits Today...

- An integral piece of an agricultural fair.
- Collectively referred to as -
  - Family Living
  - Domestic Arts
  - Creative Arts
  - Bench Shows
  - Family and Consumer Science
  - Homecraft
  - Still Life
  - Home Arts
  - Still Exhibits
  - General Entries
  - Static Exhibits



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### Why Are Competitive Exhibits Important?

- ✓ Competition fosters innovation and success
  - Brings out the best of our community
- ✓ Becomes a community forum
  - Brings the community together in a unique way
  - Provides an opportunity to exchange / pool ideas
- ✓ Increases participation in the fair
  - Easy to get involved
  - Potential for a large stakeholder base
  - Fosters life-long involvement in the fair
- ✓ Educates and informs
- ✓ Provides an attraction value
- ✓ Helps with media's question of "What's New?"



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## Competition Categories

Departments, Divisions, Categories, Sections, Lots, Classes

- No commonly accepted terminology
- Process of creating groupings of items for competition
- Strive for logical grouping, manageable judging units
- Consistency throughout
  - Example 1: Department (Foods), Division (Open), Section (Jams and Jellies), Class (Blackberry Jam)
  - Example 2: Department (Food Preservation), Class (Jams and Jellies), Lot (Combination), Sub Lot (Strawberry Rhubarb)




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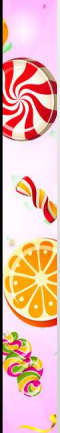
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## Determining Competition Categories

- ▣ Departments
- ▣ Divisions
- ▣ Sections
- ▣ Classes




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## How do I decide which classes to offer?

- ▣ Constantly Evaluate
  - Keep accurate records of the number of entries in each class each year.
- ▣ Seek Input
  - Comment box in the exhibit area at fair
  - Ask local craft and special interest stores
  - Exhibitor surveys
  - Guest surveys
- ▣ Be All Eyes and Ears!
  - Look around your community, borrow ideas from other fairs, watch trends, visit Pinterest




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### What About Special Contests? YES, if...

- Unique enough to warrant being separate

Special Contests -

- Provide opportunity to showcase action
- Often involve new participants
- Draw fair guests into exhibit area through activity
- Have great potential for publicity and sponsorship




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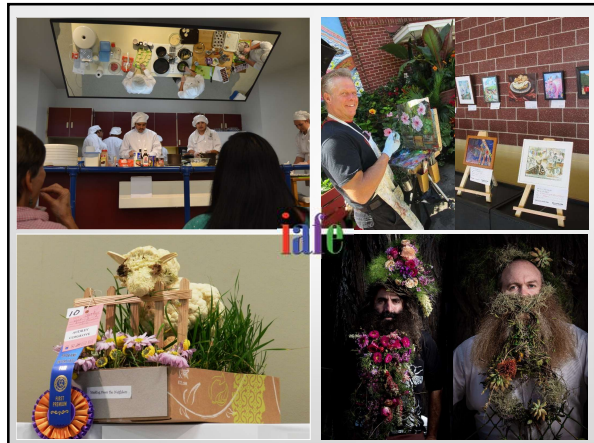
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### STEM / STEAM / STREAM




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For success, consider...

Location  
Clear Instructions  
Budget Entries  
Sponsors  
Equipment Viewing  
Safety Traffic Flow  
Microphone  
Qualified Judges  
Rules



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### The "Book"

- Premium List
- Prize Book
- Exhibitor Handbook
- Exhibitor Guidebook
- Prize List



Whatever you call it – this is the "Bible" for Competitive Exhibits. The rules and regulations. The departments, divisions, sections, classes. The details on prizes to be awarded. The sponsors. The judging criteria.



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Why are there so many rules and regulations?



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## Why?

- Provides guidelines for operation
- Provides important information to exhibitor
- Protects the organization

## General Rules


Generally listed in the front of prize book / premium list / exhibitor's guide

Identifies governing body

Lists protest policies

Shares judging procedures

Includes general entry requirements (eligibility, etc.).




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## More Rules?


- Each Department, Division, Section may have rules unique to them.
- List them with that category.
- If in conflict with general rules the category specific rules typically take precedence.

## Updates?

Review often for outdated terminology and rules.

Font, layout, general graphics changes may make it easier to read.

If General Rules and Regulations are a separate PDF document, always refer back to them within the departmental rules.




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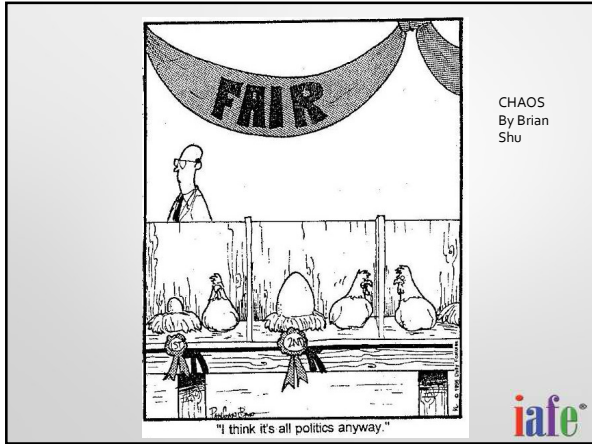
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CHAOS  
By Brian  
Shu




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### Judging Criteria...Why is it important?

**JUDGING**  
Judges will be looking for mastery of the medium, sharpness, exposure, print contrast, general artistic and aesthetic value in all divisions and classes.

<b>PRODUCT</b>	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product uniform in size, color and shape</li> <li>Free from mold, discoloration, or other indication of spoilage</li> <li>Clear cut edges, shape well preserved</li> <li>Product well ripened, no lesions or brown spots</li> <li>Product appears to be fresh, tender and firm before processing</li> <li>Product not floating</li> </ul>	
<b>PACK</b>	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practical, not fancy</li> <li>Liquid covers the product</li> <li>Liquid free from sediment, cloudiness and bubbles</li> <li>Liquid clear and bright, based on type of product</li> <li>Jar full but not crowded</li> <li>No artificial coloring</li> </ul>	
<b>CONTAINER</b>	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard counting jars</li> <li>Clear glass - clear and bright</li> <li>Lids clean and free from rust</li> <li>Jars free from cracks, rust or other damage</li> <li>Label, clean and neat, meet exhibit requirements</li> <li>Perfectly sealed</li> </ul>	




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### Judging Systems

<p><b>Danish</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically used for youth divisions, esp. 4-H &amp; FFA</li> <li>All items compared against a scorecard or standard, rather than the other items</li> <li>Everyone typically wins a ribbon</li> <li>"PREMIUM"</li> </ul>	<p><b>American</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically used for open, adult competitions</li> <li>Items ranked by comparison to each other</li> <li>Specific number of placings</li> <li>"PLACE"</li> </ul>
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### Where do you find Judges?

- Certified Judges
  - Some states and provinces
- Other Fairs
- Skilled Amateurs
  - Guilds / Groups
- Professional
  - Museums / Studios
  - Colleges, Universities, High Schools

### Other Considerations

- Honorarium
- Communication
- Expectations
- Information
- Thank You




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### Which system(s) does your FAIR use for entries?

- A. Pre-Programmed Entry System (i.e. ShoWorks, Blue Ribbon, etc.)
- B. Custom-Built Data Entry System
- C. Manual (all paper)
- D. Combination of Systems
- E. I Am Not Associated With a Fair / I Don't Know




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### Entry Processing


#### Entry Form

- User Friendly?





#### Entry Tags

- Multi-part (for claim check)
- Easy to read (by fair guest)



#### Tracking System

- Manual
- Computerized
  - ShoWorks
  - MarTech's Blue Ribbon
  - Proprietary


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## Entry Procedures

### Pre-Registration vs Walk-In

- Pre-registration saves time on receiving day
- Pre-registration may be required in cases of limited display space
- Pre-registration allows for jurying of exhibits and collection of required fees
- Allowing walk-ins provides flexibility which may lead to increased participation
- Allowing walk-ins accommodates first time exhibitors




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## Awards / Recognition

- Prize Money (premiums)
- Ribbons and Rosettes
- Physical Symbols of Achievement
  - Plaques
  - Trophies
  - Banners
  - Certificates
  - What's New Out There?







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### How Much Prize Money Should The Fair Offer?

- What is your budget?
- Number of placings paid?
- Number of classes or categories in contest?
- Was there an entrance fee for the contest?
- What do other fairs in my area pay out?
- What is our goal for the contest?





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### Competitive Exhibits AT OUR FAIR ARE sponsored (in full or part).

A. YES  
 B. NO  
 C. I AM NOT ASSOCIATED WITH A FAIR (or do not know)




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### Sponsorships

- What constitutes a sponsorship?  
Cash or in-kind (goods, gift certificates)
- What can be sponsored?  
Everything! Special Contests, Day-Of Events, Specific Classes  
Opportunity for Sponsor to target their marketing
- What does the sponsor receive?  
Level of recognition should appropriate to size of sponsorship  
Banners, signs, courtesy card, tickets, social media coverage, etc.




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## Sponsorship Sources

- Businesses
  - Related to the class/section, etc.
  - Involves businesses at "entry level" funding
- Guilds or other interest organizations
- Commodity groups
- Individuals





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## Do You Market Your Competitive Exhibits Program?

- Make a marketing plan for the Exhibits Department
- Budget for advertising to generate interest
- Present to Parent and Teacher Organizations
- Contact area teachers – arts, vocational, photography, etc.
- Place Handbook in local newspaper
- Send reminder notice to prior exhibitors when information is available
- Survey youth to find out what interests them
- Reach out to Summer Camps
- Offer a sign-up area at the fair for those interested in competing next year




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What is an example of something you are doing to market your competitive exhibits program that we haven't listed yet?




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### Exhibits are Educational

- Fosters a sense of discovery.
- Sets standards for achieving excellence.
- Opportunities to share new information.
- Creates relationships with Commodity Groups.
- Creates relationships with Youth Organizations.
- Helps meet the Fair's mission of education.



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### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



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## THOSE ABOARD THE BOAT WITH US



Spokane Interstate Fair



San Diego County Fair

### VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF



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#### How do you find these amazing people?

- Job Fairs
- Newspaper Ads
- Referrals – families, friends, associates
- Groups – guilds, associations, churches

#### How are they compensated?

- Paid employees
- Volunteers
- Stipend, honorarium or expense reimbursements
- Combination of above

#### The reasons they are important...

- On the "front line" and doing the "hands on" work
- Connect with the "stakeholders"
- Invaluable resource for props, volunteers, sponsors, and for new ideas and trends

#### How do you keep these treasures?

- Involve them in the planning process
- Communicate and THANK THEM



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### How Do I Increase Our Entries?

- Involve Schools
  - Technical / Vocational Arts
  - Art / Photography Classes
- Redefine Your Photography Department
  - Cell phone or drone (aerial) photos
  - On-line photo contests
  - Computer-manipulated photos
- Offer Technology-Based Classes
  - Website Designing
  - Filter Designing
  - Special App Creation
- Offer Going Green Classes
  - New Uses for Old Things
  - Recycling / Up-Cycling




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### Cooking Classes are Very Popular!

Offer Unique Culinary Classes and Contests

- **What A Crock!** Oklahoma State Fair - Crockpot cookoff.
- **See What Crops Up Casserole Contest:** Missouri State Fair – Exhibitors were to use fresh vegetables in their creations.
- **Herbal Beverages:** Wisconsin State Fair.
- **Cattleman’s Spaghetti and Meatballs:** Clay County Fair, IA.
- **Weird Chocolate Cakes:** Marin County Fair, CA – Examples: chocolate beet cake, chocolate chipotle cake, chocolate sauerkraut cake, etc.




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### New Trends In Categories

Dirty Pouring (Acrylic Marbling)	Doorscaping (LA County Fair)
Gourmet Cookies (Crumbly)	Displays Made with Cans
Tea Cup Fairy Gardens	Drone Obstacle Courses
Barn Quilts (Painting on Wood)	Candle Making
Herbal Beverages	Selfie Contests
Charcuterie Boards	Photo Scavenger Hunts
Resin Crafts	Underwater Photography
Pallet Woodworking	Diamond Painting
Wood Signs (Farmhouse Style Wall Art)	Charity Classes (items donated)
Polymer Clay Items	Construction Science
Ice Dying / Shibori	Homemade Root Beer
Garbage Can Decorating	Stained Glass
Rag Rugs (or Plastic Bag Rugs)	Gluten Free Baked Items
Floral Beards	Bath Salts / Bath Bombs / Soaps
	Flavored Popcorn




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## New Trends In Categories



Barton County Fair



Cabarrus County Fair NC



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Decorative Canning  
Acrylic Pour Paintings  
Graffiti Art Contests



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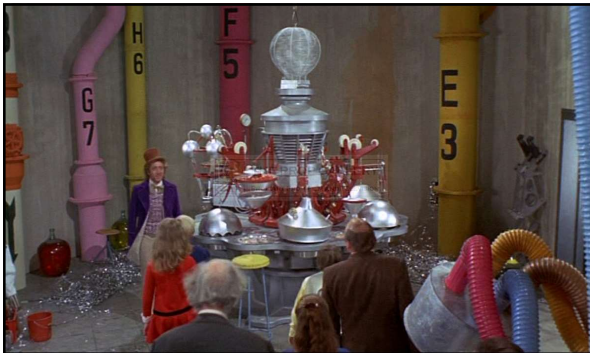
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**Creative AND Excellent Displays**

*Make a difference, create interest, generate more participation*

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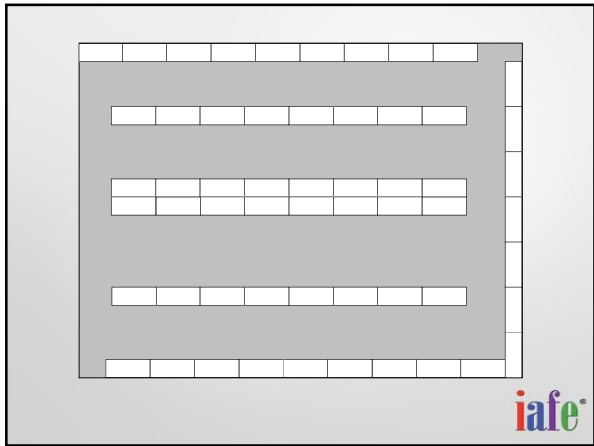
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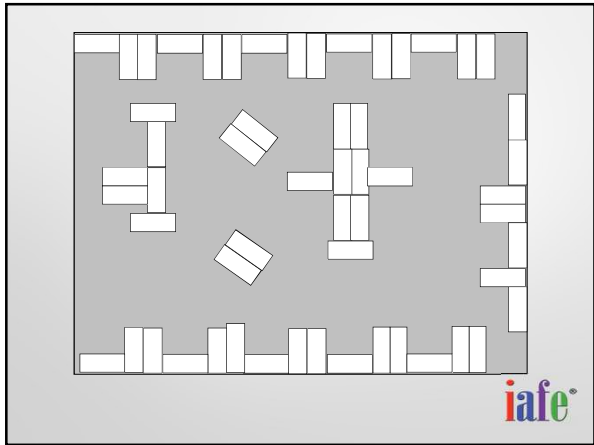
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**Are You Creating BREATH-TAKING Exhibits?**



Florida State Fair



Spokane Interstate Fair



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**Are You Creating EYE-APPEALING Exhibits?**



California State Fair



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**Are You Creating FUN Exhibits?**



North Dakota State Fair



Wisconsin State Fair



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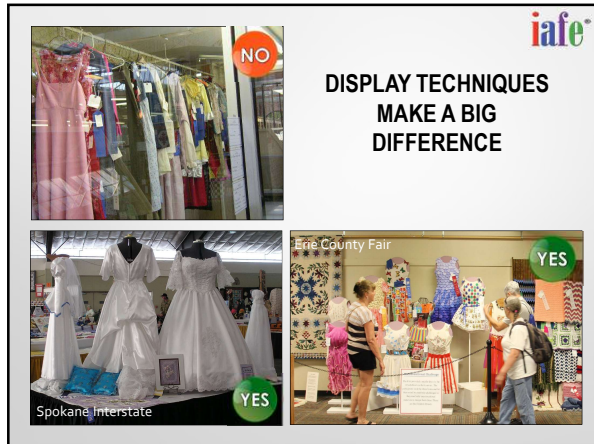
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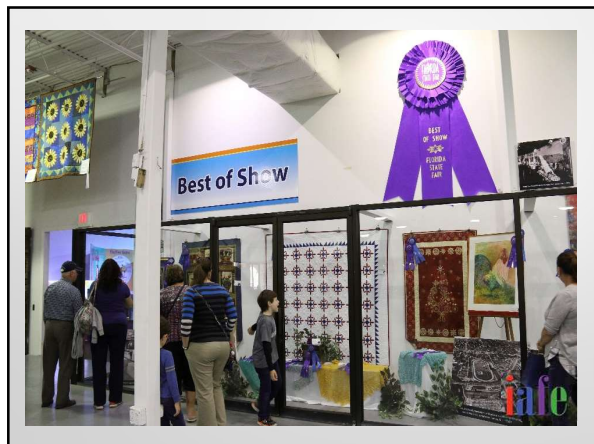
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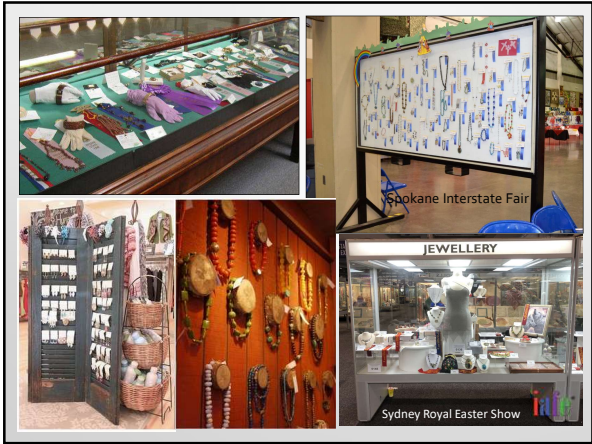
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Spokane Interstate Fair

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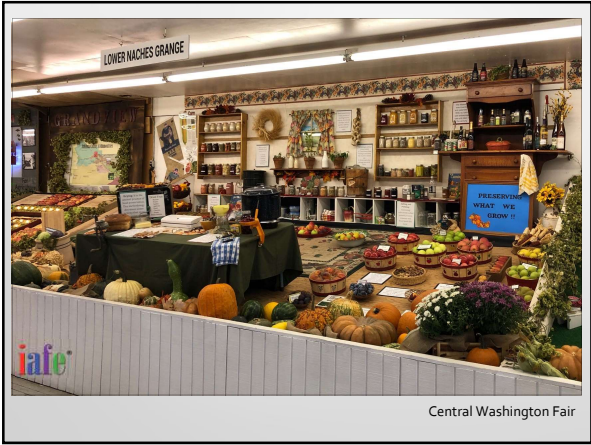
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Central Washington Fair

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Central Washington Fair



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Keep your eyes open for creative ways to display your exhibits... your next display piece may be right outside your back door.

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Douglas County Fair and Rodeo

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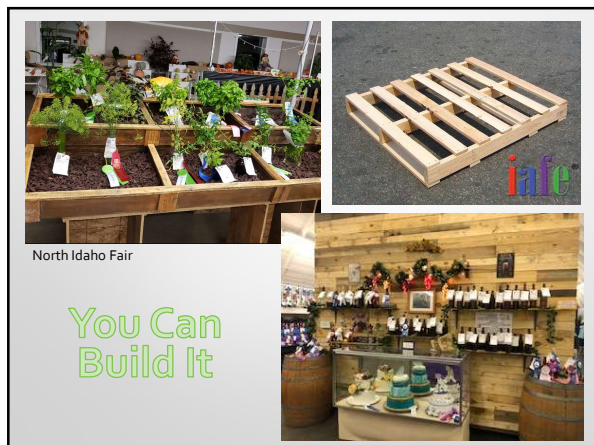
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Central Washington Fair

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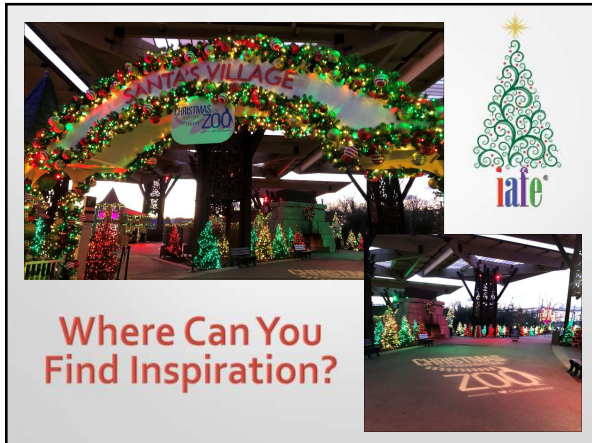
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Where Can You Find Inspiration?

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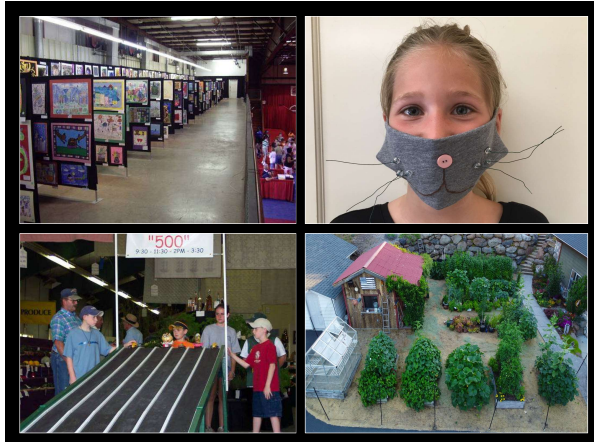
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### Change the Way You Think About Exhibits

Concentrate on Customer Service

- Make it easy to participate
- Make it easy to ask questions
- Make it easy to find information

Edu-tain / Enter-cate

- Eye-appealing Displays
- Educational Displays that are FUN!

Marketable Experience / Sponsor Involvement

Evaluate – don't be afraid to make changes




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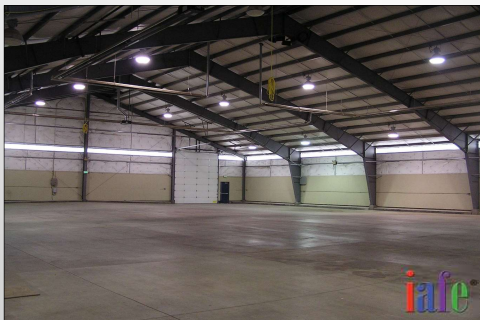
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### WHAT IF THERE WERE NO EXHIBITS?




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