Rocky Mountain Association of Fairs

100th Convention ~ Davis Conference Center, Layton, UT

2026 Schedule at a Glance

(Subject to change and updates)

Wednesday, November 11

9:00 am - 6:00 pm	Convention Registration Office Open	
9:00 am - Noon	CPR/AED Certification Class ($65.00)	*Health & Safety Institute (HSI) certified CPR/AED course - 2 yr card*
	Hill Aerospace Museum ($35.00)	*(15 min bus ride / 90-minute guided tour)*
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	IAFE IFM Workshop (Virtual) - #101 Business Planning I Open to all attendees	*Penny McBride, Fredricksburg Texas Chamber of Commerce, retired*
Noon - 1:30 pm	RMAF Past Presidents' Luncheon	
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	Lunch on your own (Attendees)	

1:30 – 2:30 pm	Workshops	

Governing Forward - Defining key governing principles and exploring the evolution needed for rapidly changing times. (Part 1 of 2)

Volunteers are the backbone of community vibrancy. We can move mountains when all the boots are pointed in the same direction. But who decides to move the mountain and where do we move it? That is the role of the board and the act of governing. This two-part presentation will walk us through the key principles of leading an organization. We will cover board member roles and responsibilities, use of committees, strategic direction, and much more.

Tim Carson, Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, Chief Executive Officer

Increasing Facility Usability and Looking for Revenue Opportunities

Optimizing the use of your facility takes a very specific approach. Jim will share the ways that the Grant County Fairgrounds has grown, AND grown the support of the County Commissioners and Community.

Jim McKiernan, Grant County Fair, WA, Director

From Rules to Ribbons: The Art of the Fair Guide

A good fair guide does more than tell exhibitors what and how to enter. It makes the rules clear, keeps the information consistent, and provides a solid foundation for all of your shows and competitions. Let's look at the art of building a guide that is useful, defensible, and actually works for the people who have to use it.

Sara Doyle, Wyoming State Fair, Exhibits Coordinator

2:45 – 3:45 pm	Workshops	

Governing Forward - Defining key governing principles and exploring the evolution needed for rapidly changing times. (Part 2 of 2)

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Tim Carson, Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, Chief Executive Officer

Flat Fees to Commissions: A Playbook for Food Vendor Pricing, Audits, and Commission-Based Operations

Learn how to transition from a flat-fee food vendor model to a percentage-based commission structure.

Brandi Ebner, Deschutes County Expo Center & Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo, Sales Coordinator

Junior Fair Boards - The Reasons Your Fair Needs Them!

Fast forward 50 years from today. I will not be here, and you may not be here, but the fair will be, and it is going to need someone to lead it AND love it. Not only do we need to start TODAY infusing the ideas that youth can bring to the table to enhance your fair's current offerings, but we need to find and cultivate youth that will become the leaders of tomorrow. What else can youth do now to become a part of your fair that will elevate the incredible path you are on? Let's be sure our mindset is not what kids "can't" do at our fairs but what they "can" do. With some guidance, they will not only "do"… they'll "do it WELL."

Jessica McLaughlin, IFMG, CFE, Spokane County Interstate Fair, Fair Coordinator

4:00 – 4:45 pm	Welcome New Attendees!	Jay Brower, 2026 President and RMAF Board of Directors
4:45 – 6:00 pm	Young Professionals General Business Meeting & Social	
6:00 – 7:15 pm	President's Reception	THEME: Party Like It's 1926
7:15 – 8:30 pm	Showcasing	
8:30 – 11:00 pm	Visit Service Member Rooms	

Thursday, November 12

8:00 am - 6:00 pm	Convention Registration Office Open	

8:30 - 9:45 am	Workshops	

Fair Life Hacks - Young Professional Sponsored Session

The fair industry is unique but none of us are alone. Whether you are a manager, service member, volunteer, or board member, it's important to have good boundaries, habits, and routines. Hear from some of the industry's experts about their fair life hacks and take note of their insight and tips that can aid in success at work and at home. Create a checklist that can best prepare you, your family and your team for YOUR showtime!

Jim Logan, Latah County Fair; Jasmyne Bryant, Crook County Fair; Jess Risney, The Source Management Group; Patrick Branger, Montana Premiere Entertainment

Rodeo Production 101

Tips and best practices to improve your rodeo, at any level

Tommy Jo Lucia, Utah Days of '47 Rodeo, Executive Director

When the Smoke Clears: Real-World Emergency Preparedness Lessons

Fairgrounds are often the first line of defense during wildfires and other natural disasters, serving as critical emergency shelters for displaced livestock and people. But what happens when an evacuation quickly exceeds your written plan? In this candid, practical session, we'll share the hard-earned lessons and unanticipated challenges faced during the Aspen Acres Fire response. From solving rapid intake bottlenecks and volunteer liabilities to managing donation influxes and animal reunification, you'll walk away with a battle-tested emergency playbook designed to help your fairgrounds handle any crisis.

Andrea Wiesenmeyer, CFE, Colorado State Fair, General Manager

9:45 – 10:15 am	Refreshment Break	
10:00 – 11:15 am	Workshops	

Community Impact & Storytelling

Brett Warder, Calgary Stampede

Stress Released: Reclaim Your Focus, Restore Your Energy

As professionals in the fair industry, you navigate a unique, multi-faceted environment with intense pressures that can lessen your ability to operate at peak performance—not only throughout the year, but especially during the high-stakes push of fair season. Taught by Michael Mezmer, CHT, Stress Released is an immersive, dynamic workshop designed specifically for fair industry professionals. You will learn proven, practical techniques to access your subconscious mind and avoid burnout before it starts, enabling you to break the stress cycle, lower tension on demand, and maintain total clarity when you need it most. Stop managing stress—start releasing it.

Michael Mezmer, Michael Mezmer Entertainment

Foundation & Fundraising Basics

Where to start and how to be successful

Jodi Lunt, Switchpoint, Chief Development Officer

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Davis Conference Center

With 70,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, including two expo halls, this venue offers a wide range of options for groups up to 4,000 guests. Flexible meeting rooms and state-of-the-art production equipment make it a premier choice for conferences, expos, galas and celebrations, performances, trade shows, sports competitions and more. Customizable packages, dedicated event planning services, full-service catering, and flexible meeting rooms ensure each event will be a success.

Facility Staff

11:30 - Noon	Strolling Act Showcasing	
Noon - 1:30 pm	Lunch Keynote Speaker	*Joshua Routh, "The S Word"* *Trust isn't given. It's earned—with sincerity.*
1:45 – 3:00 pm	Workshops	

A Complaint Free Workplace

Turn complainers into collaborators

Joshua Routh, Speaker | Author | Culture Transformer

Sponsorship Exchange: Real Challenges, Shared Solutions

Join fellow fair and event professionals for an interactive, small-group discussion focused on sponsorship. Share challenges, exchange ideas, and explore opportunities to attract partners, strengthen relationships, and grow revenue. No panels or presentations—just practical conversations with peers who understand the work. Bring a challenge, share what's working, and leave with ideas you can put into action.

Darcie Tempel, MontanaFair, Sponsorship & Marketing Manager

It's My Circus and I Don't Have Any Monkeys

How to run a fair with limited staff and resources

Melissa Saville, Ravalli County Fairgrounds, Director

3:15 – 4:15 pm	District Meetings	
4:15 – 4:45 pm	IAFE Zone 7 Meeting	
4:15 – 6:00 pm	Visit Service Member Rooms	
6:00 – 6:30 pm	Social Time and Strolling Act Showcasing	
6:30 – 7:30 pm	Dinner THEME: Holly Dolly Christmas	*Presentation of Awards: Fair Manager, Fair Person, Service Member, Young Professional*
7:30 – 8:45 pm	Showcasing	
8:45 PM – 11 PM	Visit Service Member Rooms	

Friday, November 13

Time	Session	Presenter
8:00 am - 6:00 pm	Convention Registration Office Open	
8:30 – 9:45 am	Workshops	

Budgeting is a Team Sport

Does your entire team participate in developing your annual operating budget and strategic goals? If not, they should be. Learn why it's important to get everyone involved in creating this annual organizational roadmap so they understand the budget, strategic goals and their role in delivering these results. This session will teach you how to work with your team to develop smart goals, KPI's and an organization KPI dashboard to track and manage your results. By having these tools in place, the organization has a clear plan to deliver the results you forecast and tools to hold staff accountable, measure results and celebrate successes.

Kathy Kramer, Central Washington State Fair, President & CEO

Community Engagement outside the Rodeo Arena

Ideas to keep your community engaged even when the rodeo isn't going on

Gena Black, Ogden Pioneer Days Celebration & Rodeo; DeeDee Hill, Utah Days of '47 Rodeo

Event Booking Best Practices

Tips to establish an efficient process and communicate effectively with your team

Duncan Olsen, Golden Spike Event Center

9:30 – 10:15 am	Refreshment Break	

10:00 – 11:15 am	Workshops	

The Care and Feeding of the Media

The time to engage with the media is not when you need to sell tickets, or you are about to open your event. Developing year-round relationships and having a solid PR strategy will drive this partnership. This session will share tricks of the trade, lessons learned and feedback from Media interviews on how best to work with them and create a partnership that will get you more free media coverage.

Kathy Kramer, Central Washington State Fair, President & CEO

Free Food, Priceless Press: Winning Big with a Best Fair Food Contest

Food is consistently a top reason patrons visit the Fair, so why not turn it into your biggest marketing engine? This session breaks down how a well-executed Best Fair Food Contest creates a win-win-win scenario for your Fair, your concessionaires, and your media partners. We will explore how to build massive pre-fair hype, design coveted awards vendors will fiercely compete for, and maximize earned media coverage. Come learn how a little operational coordination can yield thousands of dollars in free exposure and create an unforgettable tradition that keeps patrons coming back for more.

Brandon Bird, Eastern Idaho State Fair, General Manager

Ag Education

Creative ways to bring in more ag education to both your participants and patrons.

Sakura Gallegos, Utah State Fair; Elise Burton, North Idaho State Fair

11:30 – Noon	Strolling Act Showcasing	
Noon – 2:15 pm	Lunch & Showcasing	*Presentation of Awards: Hall of Fame*

2:15 – 3:30 pm	Workshops	

The Future of Animal Agriculture

Join us for an around-the-world view of meat and livestock. We'll discuss India's sacred cows and role as the world's #3 beef exporter, show a very unique global cattle cycle, explain China's view of meat and poultry (they are the world's largest importer and consumer), consider Brazil's rapid livestock expansion, and wrap it up with an outlook of the U.S. meat and livestock sector. Will there be enough for 9 billion people in 2050? How does the U.S. fit in? And what about climate policy and livestock? All this and more!

Brett Stuart, Global AgriTrends, Co-Founder

ICS in Action: Practical Tools for Fair Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Incident Command System (ICS) isn't just for first responders. It's a valuable tool fair organizers can use to strengthen communication, clarify responsibilities, and prepare for emergencies. This session breaks down key ICS principles and demonstrates how to apply them in everyday fair operations and public safety planning. We'll also explore practical security and preparedness tools, from risk assessments and emergency action plans to access control, incident reporting, and coordination with local law enforcement, fire, and medical agencies. Whether you're organizing a small county fair or managing a large state fair, you'll leave with practical ideas to help your team prepare, respond, and work together when it matters most.

Aly Garcia, Utah State Fair; Jon Wallace, Premier Security

Marketing Show & Tell

Real Ideas, Creative Campaigns & Fair Marketing Wins

Remember show-and-tell from grade school? We're bringing it back, fair-style! Join fellow fair professionals for a fun, interactive session where we share creative marketing ideas, successful promotions, memorable campaigns, and a few lessons learned along the way.

From social media and advertising to community partnerships and budget-friendly promotions, we'll highlight real examples from fairs of all sizes.

Attendees should bring something to show, a story to tell, or simply come ready to discover an idea worth trying at your own fair. No big budgets or marketing degrees required!

Nicki Claeys, Utah State Fair

3:30 – 6 :00 pm	Visit Service Member Rooms	
6:00 – 6:30 pm	Social Time & Strolling Showcasing	
6:30 – 7:30 pm	Dinner – Live and Silent Auction - Passing of the Gavel Theme: The Animal Inside You	
7:30 – 8:30 pm	Showcasing	
8:30 PM – 11 PM	Visit Service Member Rooms	