



**Announcing an Outstanding Career Opportunity For**

# Part-time Interim Chief Executive Officer

**Apply by January 31, 2022**





## Santa Maria Fairpark

As the premier event center in the Santa Maria Valley, the Fair's facilities are the site of choice for a multitude of public and private events, highlighted each year by the Santa Barbara County Fair. Santa Maria Fairpark's rich history stretches from the first "Santa Maria Valley Fair" in 1891 to the present-day multi-purpose facilities. By 1920, the fairgrounds were located at the 700 block of East Main Street and were officially named the "Santa Barbara County Fair." The fairgrounds moved to Hancock Field adjoining Miller Street and remained there until after World War II, then moved to the present location at Stowell Road and Thornburg Street. In 2000, in an effort to create a new image, the facility was renamed Santa Maria Fairpark, "Home of the Santa Barbara County Fair."

The Santa Maria Valley is nestled in the foothills of the Santa Barbara County wine country. Located in the heart of California's Central Coast, here you will discover beautiful scenery, championship golf courses, nationally recognized live theater productions, bird watching, pristine beaches, performing arts, world famous barbecue, succulent strawberries, nearby missions, hiking, festivals, special events, and award winning wineries.

## The Organization

The 37th District Agricultural Association (DAA) was first formed in March 1891, with the approval of both houses of the California Legislature. Administered by the State of California 37th District Agricultural Association, the 37th District includes all of Santa Barbara County that lies west of Gaviota and north of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The Association is a sub-division of the Division of Fairs and Expositions, a branch of the Department of Food and Agriculture.

The policy-making body for the Association consists of up to nine Board Members who are appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. The Board jointly establishes policies and empowers the Chief Executive Officer and his/her professional staff to implement their decisions. Current Board Members are:

Cheryl McGray, President

Brenda Estrada, Director

Randy Jones, Director

Dottie Lyons, Director

Kevin Merrill, Director

The facility serves as the hub of the Central California Coast's major events and community activities. Association sponsored events include the Annual

Santa Maria Valley Strawberry Festival, attended by over 50,000 people, and the Santa Barbara County Fair, attended by over 110,000 people.

In addition, thousands of visitors attend each year through facility rentals which host events such as trade shows, conventions, rallies, Hispanic dances and concerts, company parties, equestrian shows, wedding receptions, and birthday celebrations.

The Association has a \$1 million annual operating budget and all funds are self-generated through events and rental of the facilities and grounds. Santa Maria Fairpark is a state-owned facility; they are not supported by state or county taxes.

The 37th DAA has an obligation to support its communities by improving the quality of the Fair and the facilities and to create important venues for education, recreation, and entertainment. It is further responsible for providing a showcase for community pride and spirit to be enjoyed by all.



The Association actively promotes the area's interests and has a long tradition of bringing the community together to celebrate diversity. It further encourages healthy competition, generates enthusiasm, highlights special talents, recognizes achievements, honors outstanding contributions, enhances partnerships, promotes volunteerism, produces excitement, showcases unique interests, and produces a wealth of healthy family activities and entertainment.

## The Position

The Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is appointed by, and may be removed by, the Board of Directors of the 37th District Agricultural Association. This position is designated to serve at the pleasure (i.e., at will) of the Board of Directors. Under the direction of the Board, the CEO plans, organizes, implements, and administers the development and utilization of fairground facilities which provides the general public with a variety of entertainment, social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities.

The Chief Executive Officer oversees the following:

- Management of staff
- Finance/Accounting
- Marketing
- Interim Events
- Maintenance
- Annual Festival and Fair

The new CEO will be expected to continue to expand the access and use of the facilities throughout the year using an entrepreneurial approach. He/She



will be recognized as having the ability to provide the Association with the following qualities and attributes:

**Leadership Skills**

- Creative approach to marketing the facilities;
- Communicate the Fair’s vision and direction to employees and the public;
- Build positive and cooperative relationships with all members of the Board of Directors, staff, and the community; and
- Understand the needs and interests of the diverse communities of the region.

**Managerial Skills**

- Ability to provide personnel management of full-time and seasonal staff, as well as coordinating volunteers;
- Identify, evaluate, enhance, and generate new revenue opportunities;
- Requires knowledge of contract administration to oversee, review, and negotiate concession/vendor agreements, entertainment contracts, and interim tenants including weighing all financial and organizational impacts for the short- and long-term;
- Lead by example and motivate all employees to achieve their highest potential; and
- Experience and knowledge to administer Board policy on issues, as directed.

**Effective Communicator**

- Proactive at providing information to the Board, public, and staff;
- Open, honest, and forthright in all communications including media relations, public information, and local and government officials;
- Represent Santa Maria Fairpark and the District’s interests in the local community, the region, the fair industry, and the state in related matters including making appropriate presentations and recommendations to the Board of Directors; and
- Ability to appreciate and effectively communicate the diverse needs and interests of the DAA to a nine (9) member Board of Directors.

**Outstanding Customer Service Orientation**

- Through community and media relations, expand the public’s awareness and knowledge of Santa Maria Fairpark; and

- Establish and promote the highest standards regarding safety, customer service, and the delivery of entertainment venues to the public.

Additionally, the new Chief Executive Officer will be expected to interact effectively with the City of Santa Maria and the community on future development issues related to the fairgrounds and the surrounding community.

**The Ideal Candidate**

Professional experience and personal attributes desired in the ideal candidate should include:

- Ability to create and deliver public presentations with a passion to promote the organization;
- Be a people person with an engaging style that is comfortable interacting with a full spectrum of individuals while fostering a collaborative environment;
- Experience in business administration, public administration, marketing, public relations, communication, entertainment, or related fields;
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience in developing and managing budgets, maintain sound fiscal policy, day-to-day recordkeeping including payroll; and preparation of Board and government required reports;
- Knowledge and experience in planning, organizational restructuring, and business development including capital planning, land use, and development;
- Desire to explore options for enhanced revenue or other shared services including the knowledge and experience in fundraising, grant, and sponsorship development;
- Ability to work cooperatively in recruiting, training, and supervising employees and volunteers;
- Knowledge and experience in developing and implementing marketing plans and strategies;
- Knowledge and experience in producing and directing community-relevant programs, entertainment activities, and special events;
- Knowledge in the areas of purchasing, facility maintenance, public relations, contracting, and technology; and
- Be innovative and results driven with a track record of successful leadership.



In addition, the ideal candidate must be willing to work weekday after hours and weekend events to perform personally at any job level, and to participate in community activities and organizations.

In summary, the Board of Directors is seeking an energetic individual to employ a team approach to problem solving and be proactive in addressing issues. The new Chief Executive Officer will have many opportunities to excel in this often challenging environment.

## Qualifying Education and Experience

The Board of Directors desires an accomplished and experienced executive for this position and wishes to attract a broad spectrum of highly qualified and interested professionals to apply. The Board will consider all candidates who possess the right combination of experience and personal characteristics necessary to lead the 37th District at Santa Maria Fairpark. Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge and abilities may be qualifying. This would include:

**Education** – Associate or Bachelor's degree preferred.

**Experience** – Significant and increasing senior level experience with a demonstrated track record of success in a public or private enterprise that is deemed comparable in size, scope, and complexity. Qualifying experience may be drawn from (a) fair or related event planning; (b) public sector generalist background; (c) private sector executive leadership in an organization with



similar size and complexities that include working with a Board of Directors and a thorough understanding of the Board/Executive Director relationship; or (d) a combination of executive level experience that effectively demonstrates a keen understanding of the mission of the 37th District Agricultural Association.

All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to submit career credentials for review and consideration.

**Review and Evaluation of Experience and Education** – Candidates should be aware that the Board, reserves the right to determine the best combination of education and experience required for this position.

## Compensation

A monthly salary range is negotiable this position and will be based on the candidate's history, qualifications, and experience.



## To Apply

This is a **confidential recruitment process** and will be handled accordingly throughout the various stages of the process. Candidates should be aware that references will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established.

Electronic submittals are strongly preferred to Cheryl McGray via email at [boardpresident@santamariafairpark.com](mailto:boardpresident@santamariafairpark.com) and should include a compelling cover letter, comprehensive resume, salary history, and five (5) professional references by January 31, 2022.

The Board of Directors will review all qualified individuals and will be involved in selecting candidates for the on-site interview and evaluation process. Candidates may be asked to complete a series of written responses for further consideration and review by the Board. In addition, in depth backgrounds and verifications will be conducted on the top candidates. Following this comprehensive evaluation, the top candidate(s) will be presented to the Fair's Board of Directors for final appointment. Ideally, the new Chief Executive Officer will join the 37th District Agricultural Association at a mutually agreeable date.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the opportunity further, please contact Cheryl McGray at [boardpresident@santamariafairpark.com](mailto:boardpresident@santamariafairpark.com). Or you may leave a message for Cheryl McGray, Board President at the Fairpark Office (805) 925-8824.