

**STATE FAIR PARK  
& Event Center**



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



[statefairpark.org](http://statefairpark.org)

# Our Mission

**Central Washington Fair Association's** mission is to facilitate commerce, education, and leisure activities through production and promotion of the annual Central Washington State Fair and public events throughout the calendar year at State Fair Park & Event Center.

**State Fair Park & Event Center** is operated by the Central Washington Fair Association, a self-funded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

**Central Washington Fair Association Foundation's** mission is to raise funds to preserve and improve our agricultural programming, youth education, and State Fair Park buildings & fairgrounds. We are committed to helping State Fair Park continue to thrive as a leading cultural and educational organization.



## Become a Member of the Central Washington Fair Association

By becoming a member, you will become part of an agricultural, educational, cultural, historical, and entertainment pillar of the Yakima Valley. You will have a voice in shaping, preserving, and enhancing our grounds.

Learn more at: [statefairpark.org](http://statefairpark.org)

# 2025-2026 Board of Directors

**Ignacio Marquez**, Chair  
**Scott Wagner**, Vice Chairman  
**Oscar Zapien**, Secretary  
**Adam Dolsen**, Treasurer  
**Vicki Baker**, Director  
**LaVonne Orth**, Director  
**Tom Stokes**, Director  
**Karen Sheehan**, Director  
**Jeff Perrault**, Director  
**State Rep. Chris Corry**, Director  
**Commissioner Kyle Curtis**, Ex-Officio  
**State Sen. Curtis King**, Honorary  
**Kathy Kramer**, President/CEO



# A Note From Our President



For the past two years, the Central Washington Fair Association Board of Directors and staff have been working diligently behind the scenes on several projects that will provide revenue and entertainment opportunities to the fairgrounds while also generating new economic impact for the Yakima Valley.

On June 12, these projects were unveiled at a press conference alongside community leaders and guest speakers, including Board Chair Ignacio Marquez, Senator Curtis King, County Commissioner Kyle Curtis, Director of Washington State Department of Agriculture Derek Sandison, Yakima County Economic Development Executive Director Jonathan Smith, American Sprint Boat Racing President Dan Morrison, and President & CEO Kathy Kramer.

**\$2.7M Renovation of the Fairgrounds' RV Park** - The existing RV park layout was redesigned with 167 RV spaces, offering 50-amp power, water and sewer, along with a fully renovated ADA-compliant shower and restroom facility. The facility is open to the public for nightly rentals and will also be used by groups hosting events on the fairgrounds.

**\$2M Grant for RV Park Expansion** - This grant was obtained from Yakima County Development SEID Grant Program. This expansion project will add an additional 100 spaces to the RV Park bringing total spaces to nearly 300 and positioning the fairgrounds to attract RV rallies – “Conventions on Wheels” – bringing these groups to our community for the first time.

**\$400,000 Grant for Livestock Barn Roof Repairs** - This grant was secured through the 2025 legislative session's Washington State Competitive Capital Budget thanks to the support of Senator Curtis King and Representative Jeremie Dufault. These funds will be used to begin repairs to the livestock barn roofs. These barns are critical infrastructure that support livestock programs, educational classes, and help educate the community about the importance of agriculture in our Valley.

**Sprint Boat Racetrack** - Four acres of the fairgrounds' former racetrack was transformed into a Sprint Boat Racetrack, which hosted its inaugural race the weekend of Aug. 16-17. The race attracted 25 sprint boats and their racing teams, more than 4,000 fans, both local and from across the Pacific Northwest, and the RV Park was full for several days. This new track is a permanent addition to the fairgrounds and will be hosting two race weekends each year. In a pre-event press conference, Dan Morrison, President of American Sprint Boat Racing and owner/driver of the boat Wicked, said, “This new track is the Talladega of Sprint Boat Racing tracks.”

Immediately following the press conference, we welcomed hundreds of business and community leaders to an interactive open house and “Passport to the Park” experience co-hosted by the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce. Guests traveled across the fairgrounds, stopping at multiple stations to learn about our new developments, and enjoy food and beverage stations prepared by our in-house culinary team.

One of the stops on the open house tour was the Deccio Administration Building, where we showcased the new State Fair Park & Event Center “Wall of Fame.” This permanent display of awards, ribbons, and plaques showcases dozens of industry awards the Association has received over the past few years. These industry awards reinforce the hard work, collaboration, and creativity required from everyone to carry out the Association's mission. They also serve as a reminder that our peers across the industry recognize the innovation, creativity, and agricultural education programming that define the Association.

Each year as I sit down to write this note, I am reminded what an honor and privilege it is for us to serve as stewards of this incredible facility. Thank you to the board of directors and our incredibly talented staff for all their hard work and passion for what they do. The fairgrounds are more than buildings and events; they are a gathering place where agriculture is celebrated, partnerships are strengthened, and families create lasting memories.

# 2025 New Team Members



**Jennifer McGuire**

*VP of Operations & Agriculture*

Jen joined the Central Washington State Fair full-time in February 2025, bringing with her more than 30 years of hands-on experience—and a whole lot of heart—for fairs and agriculture. Raised in 4-H and FFA, Jen grew up showing livestock, competing in rodeos, serving on her junior fair board, and later giving back as an advisor. Agriculture isn't just her career—it's her roots.

Jen holds a degree in Leadership, studied Agricultural Marketing, and is a former college rodeo athlete. Her career has touched every corner of the fair industry, from junior livestock programs and auctions to marketing, sponsorships, and operations. She later served as CEO of two California fairgrounds, producing events large and small.



**Jeff Garretson**

*VP of Business Partnerships & Communications*

Jeff joined State Fair Park in November. Born in Yakima, Garretson most recently served for 10 years as general manager of the Yakima Valley Pippins, where he led local market activity, including ticket and sponsorship sales, business operations, ballpark operations, baseball operations and fan experience.

A part of a multigenerational local baseball family, Garretson grew up around the Yakima Beetles American Legion team and has served as a director on the Parker Youth and Sports Foundation and serves on the Yakima Valley College athletics department Hall of Fame committee.

Prior to joining the Pippins, Garretson worked for 25 years at the Yakima Herald-Republic newspaper, joining the paper as a sports writer in 1990 before moving to the news department, where he became news editor in 2008.



**Alyssa Howe**

*Marketing & Social Media Specialist*

A Yakima Valley native, Alyssa grew up attending the Fair and joined the team in January. She holds a degree in marketing from Washington State University and previously served as events & marketing director for the Central Washington Home Builders Association, overseeing major events including the Tour of Homes, Dozer Day, and the Home & Garden Show.

With a strong background in marketing and event planning, Howe supports and promotes year-round events at State Fair Park. She serves as vice president of communications for the Junior League of Yakima and is a recent graduate of the Chamber's Leadership Yakima program.



**Sophia Smart**

*Exhibits & Education Programming Manager*

Sophia Smart joined State Fair Park in October. Originally from Oklahoma, she grew up attending fairs while showing sheep through the FFA, experiences that shaped her lifelong appreciation for agricultural education and youth development.

She earned a B.S. in Agricultural Education with a minor in Horticulture from Oklahoma State University before spending six years as a middle school teacher, where she specialized in creating engaging, inclusive learning experiences. After relocating to Yakima in 2023, Sophia served as the event and volunteer coordinator at the Yakima Area Arboretum, overseeing large community events such as Luminaria and the Garden Tour while building meaningful partnerships with community organizations across the Valley.

# 2025 Fair Highlights



## FUN FAIR FACTS:

**4,000**

Competition entries

**1,152**

Animals in the livestock departments

**100 Years**

Lamburger celebrated!

**New Food**

Dole Whip

S'mores Funnel Cake

Hot Honey Popcorn Chicken

PB & Jammin' Cone Chicken

Bacon Ranch Jalapeño Fries

Korean Corn Dogs

Fish N' Chips

Old Fashioned Sodas

**18,250**

Book it to the Fair participants

**2,032**

Perfect plate entries

## Dr. Pol

With a crowd of appreciative fairgoers that filled the bleachers and created a standing-room-only event, Dr. Pol discussed the future of agriculture during his stop at the Fair. The dedicated TV veterinarian turned his one-day appearance into a memorable experience, relating pet and livestock questions to real-life happenings rather than using technical jargon.

His audience-participation session mixed a blend of humor, kindness and sincerity, and brought significant attention to the agriculture department and barns at the Fair. His compassion for pets was apparent to all, answering one youngster's question about why her kitten wouldn't eat with a simple, compassionate answer: "Like us, sometimes pets just aren't hungry."

Pol and his family spent a whole day at the Fair, signing his books and other merchandise for fans and posing for photographs.



## Sea Lion Splash

Laughter, learning and live sea lion action were on tap when 7-year-old Mia and 22-year-old Zoe visited the Fair in the only traveling sea lion show in the U.S. These two rescues, from California and South America, performed tricks and kept audiences engaged while their handlers spoke about marine life education, the importance of recycling so waste does not end up in oceans, how sea lions communicate with their whiskers, and the differences between sea lions and seals (sea lions are generally larger and louder than seals, for example). The two also played catch with Frisbees with audience members, posed for photos and spent their downtime sunbathing on the stage.

# 2025 Agriculture Highlights

## Dairyland: Featured Ag Exhibit

The 2025 Fair theme, "Cow-a Bunga," and featured agriculture display showcased the Valley's dairy industry and the state's third-largest agriculture commodity. The feature ag display provided live milking demonstrations, animal care practices, and sustainable dairy farming methods, all while highlighting farming's role in providing safe, nutritious and sustainable food.



## Livestock Updates

The Agriculture Department experienced another year of growth, highlighted by expanded participation across nearly every division. FFA Judging Day continued its upward momentum with more than 26 chapters represented, including groups traveling from the Tacoma area and Wenatchee—demonstrating the Fair's growing regional reach and reputation. This year, we also introduced a 4-H poultry and rabbit show, reestablishing specific 4-H divisions in the barns for the first time in many years. We look forward to building on this momentum by expanding both 4-H and FFA divisions across all areas of the Agriculture Department in the years ahead.

Livestock participation also saw a significant increase, with more than 1,152 animals exhibited in the barns. A special highlight for guests was the abundance of baby animals on display, including 10 lambs (with one born during the Fair), 18 baby goats, 31 piglets, 9 calves, numerous chicks and ducks, and even a baby emu in the small animal barn. Youth engagement remains strong, with Pee-Wee Showmanship surpassing 200 participants across all barns – an encouraging sign that our youth agricultural programs will continue to thrive.

**2,065**

School field trip attendees

**1,015**

Horticulture entries

**608**

Floriculture entries

**400+**

FFA students

**243**

4-H entries

**81**

Girl Scout entries

**44**

Apple Pie entries

**510**

School art projects

**587**

Food entries

# 2025 Highlights

## Yakima Valley SunDome

Celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2025, the iconic Yakima Valley SunDome continues to serve the community with some of the most diverse public gathering space in the region and state.

For more than 19 years, WIAA has called the SunDome home for state youth athletic championship tournaments. The SunDome also hosts nearly a dozen high school and college graduation ceremonies annually, faith-based assemblies, concerts and comedy shows, educational competitions and conferences, circuses, large fundraising galas and everything in between. This Yakima landmark continues to be the shining star of the fairgrounds, averaging hundreds of thousands of guests annually, and driving revenue to hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments in the Yakima Valley.



## Sprint Boat Races

In August 2025, State Fair Park & Event Center debuted its Sprint Boat Racetrack to the community, hosting its first ever American Sprint Boat Racing competition. This project was two years in the making, adding Yakima to the Pacific Northwest circuit and making it a permanent track to host races for years to come. The inaugural weekend in August brought 25 sprint boats from across the Pacific Northwest, as well as boats from Canada and New Zealand. A crowd of more than 4,000 spectators enjoyed this high-speed action from terraced seating areas, bleachers, shade tents and VIP experiences.

Sprint boats can reach speeds of 80 - 90 miles per hour and reach forces of up to eight times gravity in tight corners. Boats are generally 12 - 14 feet in length and are manned by a two-person team - a driver and a navigator. They race against the clock as they navigate around the series of islands within the track, following a very specific pattern called a "rotation". It's high-energy, high-octane action that leaves fans on the edge of their seats as they watch these drivers compete.

## Fresh Hop Ale Festival

Fresh Hop Ale Festival was held for the first time at State Fair Park in 2025. The one-day celebration of the hop harvest brought together more than 60 breweries, wineries, and cideries pouring fresh-hop creations, reinforcing its reputation as one of the biggest harvest-time beer gatherings in the nation. This was their 22nd annual event. The fairgrounds provided a great new location with plenty of parking and flexible space to grow their event in a park-like setting. This nonprofit festival raises funds to provide community support to Yakima County arts and science organizations.



# 2025 Highlights



Central Washington Fair Association Wall of Fame

## —Central Washington— FAIR ASSOCIATION

### Dave Hargreaves Roast & Toast

In March, well-known businessman Dave Hargreaves, who served on the Central Washington Fair Association Board of Directors from 2006-2022, including two terms as Board Chair, was the honored roastee at this year's "Roast & Toast" fundraising event. Proceeds from the event support the Fair school field trips, the Perfect Plate Program and the development of the permanent agriculture education garden, "The Farmer's Garden."



Dave Hargreaves & Sid Morrison

# 2025 Community Impact

#### STATE FAIR PARK ATTENDANCE



2024	2025
526,636	455,286

#### LODGING ROOM NIGHTS GENERATED



2024	2025
26,906	27,893

#### VISITORS OUTSIDE 50+ MILE RADIUS



2024	2025
33,308	31,280

#### ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT



2024	2025
\$28.4	\$29.9
MILLION	MILLION

#### COMMUNITY GIVEBACK



2025
\$210,092