

2026
Texas Association of
Fairs and Events
CONVENTION PROGRAM



Fort Worth, TX
January 8-10, 2026

Welcome to the Texas Association of Fairs & Events Annual Convention — and welcome to Cowtown!

It is an honor to welcome you to this year's TAFE Convention as we gather during our 100th Anniversary year, proudly celebrating "The Event of the Century." There is no better place to mark this milestone than right here in Fort Worth, surrounded by the people who make fairs and events such a powerful force across Texas.

We have an exciting few days ahead of us. From the moment we kick off, you'll find inspiration, education, and connection woven into every session, showcase, and conversation. Our opening keynote, Charla Corn Barrett, will challenge us to think intentionally about our brands and the stories we tell through our events—because what we do matters, and how we present it matters even more. And when it's time to turn up the energy, Clare Dunn will deliver an unforgettable performance that is nothing short of electric.

This convention would not be possible without the incredible dedication of our Board of Directors, our Executive Director Darlene Lively, and the many volunteers who have worked tirelessly to create an experience worthy of this centennial celebration. I also extend my deepest gratitude to our generous sponsors. Your investment in TAFE and in this industry allows us to learn, grow, and celebrate together.

Be sure to spend time in our trade show, attend the showcases, and engage fully in our breakout sessions. The talent, vendors, and partners you'll meet this week are the backbone of our events across the state. Supporting them strengthens all of us.

Most importantly, I encourage you to connect. Shake hands. Share ideas. Meet someone new. Leave Cowtown inspired, energized, and proud to be part of an industry that builds communities and creates memories that last a lifetime.

Thank you for being part of The Event of the Century. I'm so glad you're here.

Tammy Dooley

President, Texas Association of Fairs & Events



BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR SPONSORS. THEIR GENEROSITY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

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DARLENE LIVELY TAFE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TAFE OFFICE

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In Memoriam



Joe Vera
City of McAllen
1956-2025



Kay Wolf
Texas Festivals and Events Association
1946-2025



Dianne Linderman
Great American Entertainment Co.
1956-2025

2026 Texas Association of Fairs and Events

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, January 8

- 10:00 a.m. TAFE Board Meeting
FWCC Executive Board Room
- 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Trade Show Exhibitor
Move In/Setup
Exhibit Hall A
- 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Early Conference Registration
Convention Center Lobby
- 1:00 – 2:30p.m. Texas Event Management Institute
(TEMI) Session #1
201B

Social Media Marketing: Understanding the Landscape, Benefits & Challenges - Part 1

It's a new and quickly changing world, with Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, blogs and many, many more. How do you decide which ones are important and use them as an effective part of your event marketing mix? This session will look at maximizing new technologies and opportunities.

Speakers: TBD

- 2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Texas Event Management Institute
(TEMI) Break
201B
- 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. Texas Event Management Institute
(TEMI) Session #2
201B

Social Media Marketing: Understanding the Landscape, Benefits & Challenges - Part 2

It's a new and quickly changing world, with Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, blogs and many, many more. How do you decide which ones are important and use them as an effective part of your event marketing mix? This session will look at maximizing new technologies and opportunities.

Speakers: TBD

- 5:30 p.m. Past President's Council Meeting
203C
- 6:30 p.m. President's Reception (Invitation only)
Fort Worth Club
306 West 7th Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102

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Convention Tote Bag
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Friday, January 9

8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Trade Show Exhibitor Set-up
Exhibit Hall A

8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Registration
Convention Center Lobby

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

**Texas Event Management Institute
(TEMI) Session #3**
201B

Is Everyone Invited? How to Include Fans with Disabilities

In the United States, events that are open to the public are required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, known as the world's most stringent disability rights law. The lessons are essential ones to consider and implement at every event. This important session provides practical information and a format for designing a comprehensive Access Program for your festival/event. What are important but often forgotten aspects of a well-managed Access Program? Are you required to accommodate every request? What are some low-cost solutions? Helping to avoid litigation by being prepared.

Speakers: TBD

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

**Texas Event Management
Institute Break**

10:15 – 11:45 a.m.

**Texas Event Management
Institute Session #4**
201B

Step One: Business Plans

A successful event doesn't start with the fireworks finale. Behind every exciting, fun-filled event is a well-run business, complete with paperwork, planning meetings, legal obligations to be met, and partnerships to be built. Reputations are often based far more upon the business side of your event than on who your headline entertainers are. We'll teach you what you need to be thinking about.

Speakers: TBD

11:30 a.m.	Event Room Coordinator Orientation Meeting <i>201A</i>
12:59 p.m.	\$100 On-Time Door Prize <i>Grand Ballroom</i>
1:00 p.m.	Silent Auction Opens <i>Break Out Session Lobby</i>
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Opening General Session <i>Grand Ballroom</i>
Keynote Speaker	Charla Corn Barrett <i>Brand Strategist & Transformational Stylist</i>

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ROUND TABLE SESSIONS

Choose your favorite educational sessions throughout the convention!

Keeping the Sponsor Happy!

Meeting Room: 201B

Speaker: Dustin Coufal, Heart O' Texas Fair & Rodeo

Sponsors are the lifeblood of any fair, festival or event. But, maintaining those relationships takes more than just thank-you email. This roundtable will explore strategies to build strong, lasting partnerships with your sponsors and how to keep sponsors engaged year after year.

Pricing It All – Establishing Fair Event Prices

Meeting Room: 201C

Speaker: Brady Ragland, Amarillo Tri-State Fair & Rodeo

Rethink your approach to pricing and explore strategies to maximize revenue at your fair, festival, or event. This roundtable will explore how to set fair, attractive prices for attendees while balancing costs and revenue, providing insights to help you make smarter, more effective pricing decisions.

ROUND TABLE SESSIONS FRIDAY 2:15-3:00 PM

Crowning Moments: Queen Contests and Pageants

Meeting Room: 202A

Speaker: Luis Saldana, Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show & Rodeo

It's more than just crowns and sashes! This roundtable will explore ways to create a meaningful experience for contestants, and leave with ideas to take your queen contest or pageant to the next level.

Commercial Vendors: Who, What & Where

Meeting Room: 202B

Speaker: Julie Bass, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo

Explore the ins and outs of commercial vendors at fairs and festivals in this interactive roundtable. Share strategies for recruiting the right vendors, selecting products and services that appeal to your audience, and determining optimal placement to maximize visibility and sales.

Of Course, We Have Insurance...

Meeting Room: 202C

Speaker: Allen Kaminski, Austin County Fair

You have an insurance policy. Now what? This roundtable walks through how to make the most of your coverage, understand what's actually protected, and navigate claims or issues when they arise.

Another 8 Seconds: All Things Rodeo

Meeting Room: 202D

Speaker: TC Long, Gold Buckle Media Productions

Hold on tight! This roundtable covers all things rodeo—from production and programming to marketing and partnerships. Learn how to elevate your event's entertainment value, create memorable experiences for your guests, and maximize your potential with sponsors and supporters.

Concurrent Educational Session Sponsors

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3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Talley Amusements Lounge <i>(inside of the Trade Show)</i>
3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Trade Show Opening <i>Exhibit Hall A</i>
3:30 – 3:45 p.m.	TAFE 100th Birthday Cake Celebration Join us for the Celebration of the Century <i>Talley Amusements Lounge</i>
5:00 – 5:30 p.m.	Young Professional (YP) Reception <u>(Open to attendees under 40 years of age)</u> <i>Ballroom A Foyer Red Carpet</i>
5:45 – 6:30 p.m.	First Time Attendee Reception <i>203C</i>
6:45 – 7:15 p.m.	Welcome Reception Cocktail Party <i>Grand Ballroom</i> <i>Pre-Function Area Outside Grand Ballroom</i>
7:15 – 8:00 p.m.	Dinner <i>Grand Ballroom</i>
8:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Live Auction
8:30 – 10:30 p.m.	Entertainment Showcases <i>Grand Ballroom</i>
10:30 p.m.	\$100 Door Prize Drawing <i>Grand Ballroom</i>

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**FORT BEND COUNTY
FAIR**



- 7:00 – 8:00 a.m.** **Breakfast Buffet & Door Prizes**
Grand Ballroom
- 7:59 a.m.** **\$100 Door Prize Drawing**
Grand Ballroom
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.** **Registration**
Convention Center Lobby
- 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.** **General Session**
Grand Ballroom
2026 TAFE Ray Cammack Shows
Award of Excellence for
Marketing & Communication
Best Trade Show Booth Award
- 10:15 – 11:00 a.m.** **TAFE Associates Business Meeting**
(Associate Members Only)
203C
- 10:15 – 11:00 a.m** Educational Sessions
201B, C; 202A, B, C, D; 203A, B

**Enhancing the Exhibitor Experience:
Building Value Beyond the Show Ring**

Meeting Room: 201B

Speaker: Michelle Helm, Tulsa State Fair

Discover ways to elevate the junior livestock exhibitor experience! This session walks through proven strategies to add value to your show. Learn how these elements can strengthen participation and create a more memorable, meaningful experience for every exhibitor.

Small Fairs 101: Livestock Edition

Meeting Room: 201C

Speaker: Dean Fuchs, Washington County Fair

No bull, this session covers it all! This session will touch on all aspects of managing a livestock show, including drug testing, judge selection, entry fees and more.

**Beyond Basic Rain Insurance:
Non-Traditional Coverages**

Meeting Room: 202A

Robert Holmes, Spectrum Weather and Specialty Insurance

Explore weather protection options beyond traditional rain insurance. This session highlights innovative coverage solutions, what they include, and how they can provide added financial security for your event, no matter the forecast.

Media Award Success: More than Just Filling it Out

Meeting Room: 202B

Speaker: Joe Garcia, City of McAllen

Want your Ray Cammack Show Marketing and Communication Award entries to stand out? Join us for tips, tricks, and creative ideas to polish your submissions and better understand how the contest process works.

Artificial Intelligence for Fair and Event Professionals

Meeting Room: 202C

Speaker: S. David Ramirez, SDMRamirez

Artificial intelligence doesn't need to be overwhelming, intimidating, or just for techies. This session is your guided intro to AI without the jargon or the panic. We'll break down how today's tools (like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot) actually work, what they can and can't do, and how fairs, expos, and nonprofits can use AI in practical, human-centered ways. You'll leave this session knowing AI isn't about replacing people, it's about helping you do more of what you love.

Strength in Awareness/Freedom in Action

Meeting Room: 202D

Speaker: Taylor Talley, Talley Amusements

Our members operate some of the largest public events in the State of Texas. This session will shed light on human trafficking issues and explore how events of all sizes can help prevent and respond to these concerns.

Everyone Loves a (Safe) Parade

Meeting Room: 203A

Speaker: Steve Adelman, Adelman Law Group

There is a surprisingly long list of things that have gone tragically wrong at parades and other events that take place on the streets of our cities and towns. This session will consider a variety of foreseeable risks and discuss ways to mitigate them based on the new American National Standard for Parade Safety, ANSI ES1.42-2025.

Breakfast Sponsor

???

Concurrent Educational Session Breaks Sponsor

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Restroom Sponsor

REDMAN JANNY



Video Production as a Marketing Tool

Meeting Room: 203B

Speaker: Luke Linderman & Alexandra Linderman, Great American Entertainment Company

A short-form masterclass on marketing, social media and filmmaking, rooted in wholesome, heartfelt storytelling and real, hands-on experiences. In a digital age full of noise and short attention spans, this session will show fairs and events how to inspire, engage and connect with their communities.

SATURDAY 10:15 TO 11:00 AM

Saturday Luncheon Sponsors

**AMARILLO TRI-STATE FAIR & RODEO
HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO
PASADENA LIVESTOCK SHOW & RODEO**

Dessert Sponsor

RAY CAMMACK SHOWS



Talent Showcase Sponsor
(Saturday Luncheon)

**HEART OF AMERICA SHOWS
MCKINNEY FOOD SERVICES**



Mr. & Ms. X Contest Sponsor

FORT BEND COUNTY FAIR

11:30 a.m.

Luncheon

Grand Ballroom

11:45 – 12:15 p.m.

**TAFE Professional Awards and
Hall of Fame Awards**

Grand Ballroom

12:15 – 12:45 p.m.

TAFE Annual Business Meeting

Grand Ballroom

- TAFE Nominations Committee Report
- Recognition of Outgoing TAFE Board Members
- Recognition of Outgoing TAFE President
- Announcement of 2027 Convention Theme & Date
- Announcement of Mr. & Ms. X Contest Winners

12:45 – 2:00 p.m.

Talent Showcases

Grand Ballroom



Pre-function Reception
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RAY CAMMACK SHOWS

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**STIFFLERS CONCESSIONS
HARRIS COUNTY FAIR & RODEO**

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**HEART O' TEXAS FAIR & RODEO
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SATURDAY 2:15 TO 3:00 PM

EDUCATIONAL SESSION

How to Make Talking Points Stick

Meeting Room: 201B

Speaker: Dr. Tobin Redwine, Montgomery County Fair

Backed by research in messaging and communication strategy, Dr. Tobin Redwine will share a framework for crafting impact statements, talking points, and social content that sticks with your target audience.

Small Fairs 102: People Edition

Meeting Room: 201C

Speaker: Dean Fuchs, Washington County Fair

Herding animals is easy, herding people is the real challenge! This session will explore strategies to manage people involved in the county fair, including volunteers, parents and vendors!

Crowd Control: Tips & Techniques

Meeting Room: 202A

Speaker: Tina Taylor, Pasadena Livestock Show & Rodeo

Crowds are great! Right? Managing them safely and efficiently takes planning. Learn proven strategies and techniques to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for event attendees.

Setting the Sale: Maximizing Your Exhibitor's Return

Meeting Room: 202B

Speaker: Madalynn Kainer, Washington County Fair

Turn bids into success! Explore strategies for maximizing exhibitor returns, keeping bidders engaged, and creating a fun, high-energy sale experience that people will talk about long after the final bid.

Next Level Artificial Intelligence

Meeting Room: 202C

Speaker: S. David Ramirez, SDMRamirez

You've used ChatGPT. You've seen the magic. But now it's time to level up. This session is designed for fair and expo leaders who are ready to turn AI from a novelty into a strategy. We'll dig into how to build consistent, ethical, and effective AI use within small and mid-sized organizations. You'll learn how to lead the AI conversation in your organization, whether you're the ED, the marketing manager, or the person who "just gets tech stuff."

Plug Into Your CVB: A Partnership for Success

Meeting Room: 202D

Speaker: Tammy Dooley & Jodi Willard, Visit Granbury and Visit Rockwall

Do you partner with your local Convention and Visitor's Bureau? Their services could expand your festival or event's audience. Join Visit Rockwall and Visit Granbury as they share how they've supported local events and contributed to their growth. Bring your questions to this informative session!

Contracts, Deconstructed and Demystified

Meeting Room: 203A

Speakers: Steve Adelman, Adelman Law Group

We use contracts all the time, yet many of the provisions are incomprehensible to non-lawyers (and some lawyers too!). We will explore the scary boilerplate no one reads, but which will determine your rights and remedies if things go wrong. Cancellation and indemnification and force majeure, oh my!

Potholes for Fairs and Events Insurance

Meeting Room: 203B

Speaker: David Wellmann, Wellmann Insurance Agency

From overlooked risks to unexpected claims, this session highlights common insurance "potholes" that can trip up fairs and events.

SATURDAY 2:15 TO 3:00 PM

EDUCATIONAL SESSION



SWAP SHOPS

Choose your favorite educational sessions throughout the convention!

Serving Up Success: Food Vendor Swap Shop

Meeting Room: 201B

Speaker: Callie Huber, State Fair of Texas

Swap ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and share what's working for food vendors and food trucks at fairs. "Serving Up Success" is a swap shop to exchange best practices, discuss trends, and learn from each other's successes.

Making the Most of In-Kind Support

Meeting Room: 201C

Speaker: TBD

Join this swap shop to share and discover strategies for leveraging in-kind donations at your fair or festival. Learn how others are turning donated goods and services into meaningful support, building stronger partnerships, and stretching event budgets without cutting corners.

All Hands on Deck: Volunteer Management at Your Event

Meeting Room: 202A

Speaker: Katy Feller, Heart O' Texas Fair & Rodeo

Step into this collaborative swap shop to share and discover practical strategies for recruiting, training, and managing volunteers at your fair or festival. Exchange ideas, learn what's worked at other events, and pick up tips to keep your volunteer teams engaged, motivated, and coming back year after year.

What Works for You? Ticketing Swap Shop

Meeting Room: 202B

Speaker: Lindsay Robertson, Amarillo Tri-State Fair

Participate in this swap shop to explore ticketing strategies that work for fairs and festivals. Share your successes, and gather practical tips for selling tickets efficiently, managing entry, and improving the guest experience.

Managing Your Message: Social Media Management Swap Shop

Meeting Room: 202C

Speaker: Hannah Figg, North Texas Fair & Rodeo

Engage in this interactive swap shop to share and discover strategies for managing social media at your fair or festival. Exchange tips on content creation, scheduling, audience engagement, and best practices to amplify your event's message and connect with your community.

I Tried Something New

Meeting Room: 202D

Speaker: Madison Harris, Montgomery County Fair

Tried something new at your event in 2025? Share your experience and learn from others! Discover fresh ideas, creative approaches, and innovative strategies that worked—or didn't—at other events. Take home inspiration to try something new at your fair, festival, or event.

SATURDAY 3:15 TO 4:00 PM

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Talley Amusements Lounge <i>(Inside of Trade Show)</i>
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Trade Show Opens <i>Exhibit Hall A</i>
6:00 p.m.	Silent Auction Closes & Check Out <i>Break Out Session Lobby</i>
6:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Sponsors Reception <i>Ballroom A Foyer Red Carpet</i>
7:00 – 7:30 p.m.	Foundation Night Reception <i>Pre-Function Area Outside Grand Ballroom</i>
7:30 p.m.	Education Foundation Night Dinner & Dance <i>Grand Ballroom</i> <u>Dinner & Dance included in convention registration fee.</u> Evening Entertainment: Opening Act: Luke Prater Headliner: Clare Dunn

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

9:00 a.m.	TAFE Board of Directors Meeting <i>FWCC Executive Boardroom</i>
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STRAW HAT TABLE CENTERPIECES

CAVENDER'S

Saturday Education Foundation
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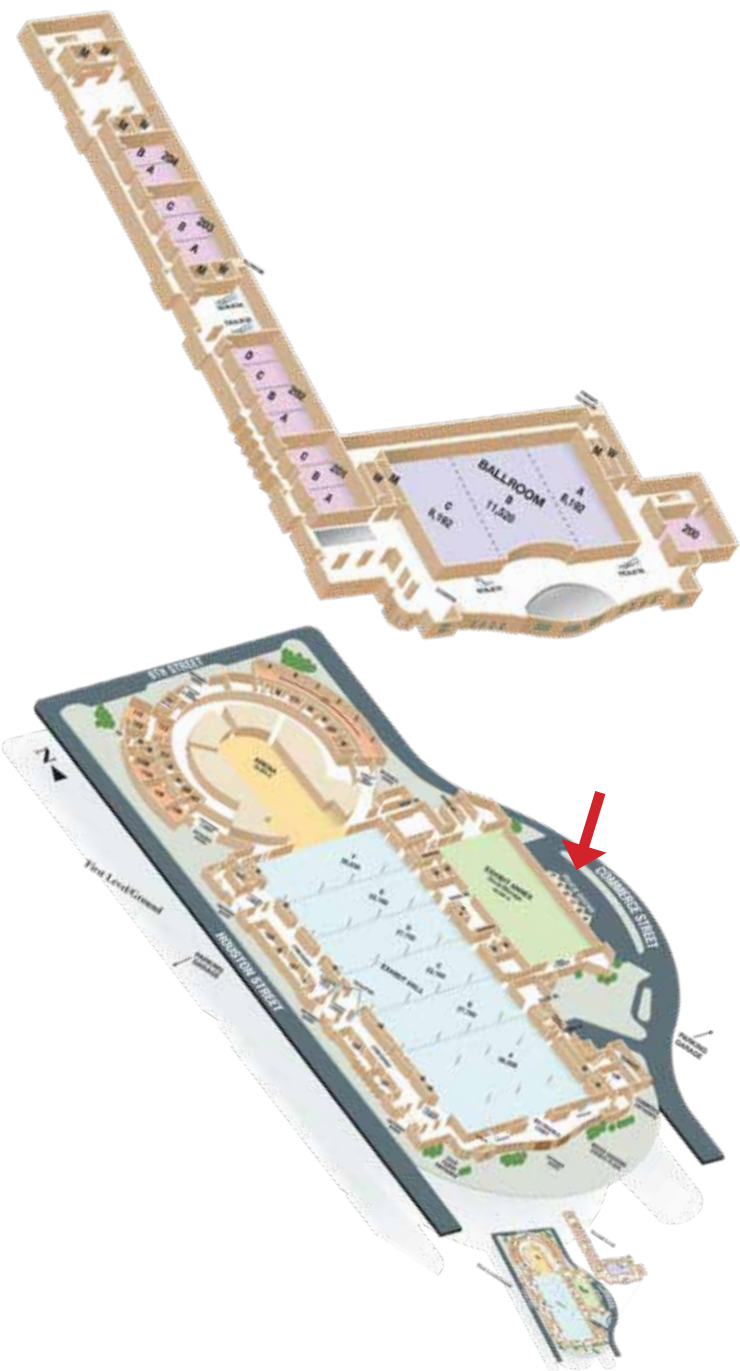
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FORT WORTH CONVENTION CENTER



TRADE SHOW EXHIBITORS

<u>BUSINESS NAME</u>	<u>BOOTH</u>
Ray Cammack Shows	1
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Great American Entertainment Co.
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Lydia Huebner
 Austin County Fair



Jenna Jennings
 Brazoria County Fair Association



Kimber Naleway
 Friends of Conroe, Inc./
 Conroe Cajun Catfish Festival



Emma Strelczyk
 Jackson Youth County Fair



Makenzie Taylor
 Titus County Fair

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 FOR THE 2027 TAFE CONVENTION:
 JANUARY 7-9, 2027**



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