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OUTDOOR AMUSEMENT BUSINESS ASSOCIATION AND SHOWMEN'S LEAGUE OF AMERICA HOST FUNDRAISER AT THE BIG E

After the gates closed at The Big E on Tuesday, Sept. 29, concessionaires, industry leaders, amusement employees and staff from event producer Eastern States Exposition (ESE) gathered at the Transportation Center, abutting the Avenue of States in West Springfield, Mass., for The Jamboree, a fundraiser which supported both the Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA) and Showmen's League of America (SLA).

The OABA represents carnivals, circuses and hundreds of traveling concessionaires that provide food, amusement games and more throughout the United States. These are individuals and businesses who rely heavily on seasonal labor to supplement their full-time staff. The OABA is a trade organization which protects the interests of these groups by fundraising, petitioning and otherwise advocating before congress, including for more readily available foreign labor visas for migrant workers in the industry.

Founded in 1913, the SLA is composed of a community of show people with a mission to promote international friendship and fellowship by exchanging shared industry knowledge, serving the greater community and providing scholarships, financial aid and memorial services to protect the welfare of their membership.

The theme for the occasion was Bike Night, in honor of The Big E Bike Night, a brand-new event that debuted at the Fair earlier that day. Attendees dressed the part by sporting their best biker leathers, studded denim, festive fringe and more motorcycle-inspired attire. The evening's fundraising efforts were advanced by an auction, tip boards and a 50/50 raffle, which raised an impressive $36,360. Proceeds benefited both organizations. Ultimately, 100% of proceeds were dispersed between the OABA and SLA, and totals reached well over $50,000.

The evening was coordinated by SLA President and Vice President of North American Midway Entertainment (NAME) Blake Huston and OABA Chair and concessionaire Michael Doolan of Banquet in a Bun and Doolan Amusement Co. It is by their leadership and diligence that the industry was brought together for such an impactful evening. OABA President Greg Chiecko and his staff were also in attendance, along with special guests including Vice President of Business Development at Fare Foods Audrey Poole and the incoming president of the National Independent Concessionaires Association (NICA), Vincent Nelson, Certified Concessionaire Executive (CCE).

“The Jamboree has become one of the big ‘to-do’ events for owners, management and staff while working in West Springfield each September,” said Huston. “With more than 400 people in attendance for dinner, drinks, an auction and camaraderie, we have every guest to thank for this successful year of fundraising. We appreciate all who donated food and auction items and that continue to support this great event.”

ESE was proud to contribute a collectible commemorative poster from The Big E 2026, signed by Georgia-based artist Jason Craig, to the auction and was honored to serve as a host site for the occasion.

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About Eastern States Exposition

It’s always showtime at Eastern States Exposition (ESE), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation located in West Springfield, Mass. ESE is committed to excellence in providing opportunities for the development and promotion of agriculture, industry, education and family entertainment while preserving our New England heritage. The 175-acre campus holds five exhibition buildings, equivalent to 355,000 square feet of ground level indoor space. Their year-round, on-site dining and entertainment locations include Storrowton Village Museum, Eastern States Farmers Market & Wine Café, Storrowton Tavern & Carriage House. The facility also hosts more than 120 shows and events annually, such as The Big E, America’s only multi-state fair, and Hooplandia, the Northeast’s Ultimate 3x3 Basketball Tourney + Festival. For more information, check out EasternStatesExposition.com, or find us on social media.

Above: OABA Chair Michael Doolan, SLA President Blake Huston and OABA President Greg Chiecko.