

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR COMPLEX

Board Meeting

December 20, 2004

Floral Building
Washington County Fair Complex
873 NE 34th Avenue
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124

Regular Session – 3:00 p.m.
Executive Session – 4:30 p.m.*

* If necessary.

AGENDA

NOTICE OF MEETING

Washington County Fair Complex Board
Board Retreat, Wednesday, December 20, 2004, at 11:30 a.m.
Regular Meeting: Wednesday, December 20, 2004, at 3:00 p.m.
Executive Session: Wednesday, December 20, 2004, at 4:30 p.m.*
Floral Building
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124

A. Richard Vial, President
Kathy Christy, Vice President W. Rafe Flagg, Treasurer
Herbert Hirst, Member Kathy Schmidlkofer, Secretary

Standing Committees

Air Show & Airport Interface
Herbert Hirst, Board Member

County Fair & Rodeo Operations
Kathy Christy, Board Member
Kathy Schmidlkofer, Board Member

253 Days to the 2005 Washington County Fair & Rodeo

- A. **Call the Regular Meeting to Order:** All matters noticed and listed on this agenda, in any category, may be considered for action in any order at the discretion of the Board President. Items not so noticed may be discussed at the discretion of the Board President, but cannot be considered for action.
- B. **Public Welcome – Audience Time:** This time is provided for members of the audience to comment on any item(s) not on the regular agenda. At the discretion of the Board President, each individual's comments may be limited to two minutes. Audience members, when recognized by the Board President, may also comment at the time agenda topics are being discussed by the Board. It is requested that those addressing the Board state their full name, address and organization represented.
- C. **Consent Agenda:** All Consent Agenda items shall be approved without discussion and with one motion except those items removed from the Consent Agenda by a Board member or a member of the public attending the meeting so requesting. If a matter is removed, it shall then be considered, discussed and voted on individually, after the Consent Agenda has been approved.
1. Financial Statements
 - A. Budget Overview – July - November 2004 (**Supplement**)
 - B. Balance Sheet – July – November 2004 (**Supplement**)
 - C. Other, if any
 - A. Fair Board Minutes – November 2004
 - B. Facility Use Schedule – December 2004
 - C. Other, if any

D. Special Reports

1. Rodeo Committee Report – Cody Feinauer, Rodeo Committee Chair
2. 4-H Report – John Baggott, OSU Extension Service
3. Fair Boosters Report – Ed Kristovich, Booster President
4. Air Show & Airport Interface Committee – Herb Hirst
5. County Fair & Rodeo Operations Committee/Fair Visioning Committee – Kathy Christy/Kathy Schmidlkofer
6. Treasure's Report – W. Rafe Flagg
7. Operations Report – Don G. Hillman, Executive Director
8. Other, if any

E. Old Business

1. Redevelopment Update, if any
2. Plans Review Committee – Continue Discussion
3. Fair Complex Board Appointees – Update
4. OFA Convention – January 6-9, 2005
5. Other, if any

F. New Business

1. Staff Report – 2005 Rodeo
2. Staff Report – Vision Committee Recommendations
3. 2005 Air Show Dates/Hardy Plant Sale (**Supplement**)
4. Board Reorganizational Structure (**Supplement**)
5. Other, if any

G. Announcements

1. Calendar of Events
2. Other, if any

H. Correspondence

1. Letters and Cards, if any (**Supplement**)
2. Other, if any

I. Board Oral Communications

J. Other Matters of Information

1. Rodeo Committee November 2004 Meeting Minutes (if any/available)
2. Booster November 2004 Meeting Minutes
3. Newspaper Articles, if any (**Supplement**)
4. Website Activity
5. Other, if any

K. Adjourn

*Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.610-192.690 to discuss Real Estate matters and/or Personnel issues immediately following the regular Fair Complex Board meeting, if deemed necessary.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), this material, in alternate formats, or special accommodations for the meeting, will be made available by calling (503) 648-1416 at least 48 hours prior to this meeting.

CONSENT ITEMS

County of Washington

Washington County Fair Complex
873 NE 34th Avenue
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
Phone: (503) 648-1416
Fax: (503) 648-7208
donh@faircomplex.com
www.faircomplex.com

FAX MEMORANDUM

Date: December 15, 2004

To: Washington County Fair Complex Board
Washington County Fair Complex

From: Don G. Hillman, Executive Director
Washington County Fair Complex

Re: July – November 2004 Financial Statements

Find attached the July – November 2004 Budget Overview and Balance Sheets. They were produced by the Washington County Finance Department's WIZARD program and reflect accounting activity through the month of November 2004. Here are some observations noted by staff.

Line 45 – Commercial Booth Rental. For budgeting purposes, this account was previously combined with Concessions. In breaking out the two categories for the new WIZARD accounting system, it appears that in computing the estimate for the 2004/05 budget, a 35% factor (similar to concessions, carnival, etc.) was incorrectly applied to this category resulted in the budget estimate being overstated by approximately \$15,000.

Line 46 – Dept. of Agriculture. This revenue is scheduled to be received in January.

Line 48 – Admissions. Reflects low attendance for Sunday Concert.

Line 55 – Other Revenues. Included a \$5,000 estimate for Corporate Picnics. No picnics materialized during this year's fair.

Line 81 – Total Fairtime Expense. There are still payment outstanding for charges related to tents and canopies; manure removal, etc.

Line 89 – Rodeo Sponsorships. Approximately \$5,150 is still to be collected. The sponsorship fee for Bright Side Electric has been abated in that they choose not to participate.

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR COMPLEX

Budget Overview July - November 2004

12/13/04

Mission Statement: The mission of the Washington County Fair Complex is to provide excellent facilities and services in a self-supporting manner for the following purposes:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Preserve the annual County Fair & Rodeo and its heritage. | 2. Promote the "World-Class" agriculture of the County. |
| 3. Provide a welcoming environment for all volunteers. | 4. Commitment to life-long learning with a special emphasis on youth. |
| 5. Promote year-round facilities for consumer trade shows, public expositions and special gatherings. | 6. Promote a sense of community among County residents. |

Line	Description	July 2004	August 2004	September 2004	October 2004	November 2004	Year to Date 2004/05	Adopted 2004/05	%	Notes
No.	Opening Balance	\$ 397,999	\$ 145,239	\$ 351,993	\$ 299,382	\$ 375,413		\$ 379,757		
	Interim Operating Revenues									
1	Parking	\$ 75	\$ 28,965	\$ 70	\$ -	\$ 7,697	\$ 36,807	\$ 26,000	142%	
2	RV Park		930	1,680	332	1,910	4,852	15,350	32%	
3	Rentals	13,005	4,100	16,531	18,312	28,721	80,669	174,894	46%	
4	Concessions	2,813	200	1,078	100	100	4,291	6,000	72%	
5	Misc Income	6,181	2,425	1,794	297	213	10,910	10,500	104%	
6										
7	Total Interim Operating Revenues	\$ 22,074	\$ 36,620	\$ 21,153	\$ 19,041	\$ 38,641	\$ 137,529	\$ 232,744	59%	
8	Interim Operating Expenses									
9	Personal Services	\$ 14,081	\$ 23,727	\$ 28,541	\$ 38,147	\$ 27,311	131,807	\$ 306,419	43%	(1)
10	Supplies	4,636	3,116	2,367	201	424	10,744	22,000	49%	
11	Professional Services	672	783	-	473	-	1,928	8,000	24%	
12	Advertising	273	748	33	395	277	1,726	6,000	29%	
13	Printing	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	0%	
14	Communications	32	75	44	44	87	282			(2)
15	Utilities	489	2,613	5,605	3,124	3,906	15,737	77,000	20%	
16	Repair and Maintenance	6,736	3,553	241	2,271	2,017	14,818	45,000	33%	
17	Rentals	665	796	484	215	215	2,375	6,000	40%	
18	Dues and Memberships	-	30	30	55	337	452	1,125	40%	
19	Training and Travel	-	-	393	-	-	393	400	98%	
20	Insurance	13,009	-	-	28	-	13,037	13,250	98%	
21	Postage	-	-	-	49	77	126	1,600	8%	
22	Printing internal	190	-	10	778	-	978	-		(3)
23	Telephones	-	-	655	494	625	1,774	6,500	27%	
24	Special Expenses	131	402	1,945	(680)	109	1,907	11,000	17%	
25	County Indirect Cost	-	3,319	-	769	3,319	7,407	13,936	53%	
26	Notes:									
27	(1) October had three payroll periods.									
28	(2) Should be classified as Telephones.									
29	(3) Should be part of Printing.									
30										
31	Total Interim Operating Expenses	\$ 40,914	\$ 39,162	\$ 40,348	\$ 46,363	\$ 38,704	\$ 205,491	\$ 519,230	40%	
32										
33	Net Interim Revenues/Expenses	\$ (18,840)	\$ (2,542)	\$ (19,195)	\$ (27,322)	\$ (63)	\$ (67,962)	\$ (286,486)	24%	

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR COMPLEX

Budget Overview July - November 2004

								12/13/04	
Description	July 2004	August 2004	September 2004	October 2004	November 2004	Year to Date 2004/05	Adopted 2004-05	%	
34 Fair Revenues									
35 Commercial Booth Rentals	\$ 43,957	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 44,957	\$ 64,325	70%	(1)
36 Dept of Agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	-	38,000		(2)
37 Parking Fees	1,055	76,755	-	-	-	77,810	81,000	96%	
38 Admissions	724	30,776	-	652	-	32,152	60,000	54%	(3)
39 Sponsorships	36,750	8,500	-	11,250	-	56,500	60,000	94%	
40 Carnival Income	-	67,572	-	-	-	67,572	65,000	104%	
41 Advertising	1,150	300	-	-	-	1,450	1,500	97%	
42 Entry Fees	4,147	299	-	-	-	4,446	4,600	97%	
43 Rentals	-	(11)	-	-	-	(11)	-		(4)
44 Concessions	12,850	67,064	-	-	-	79,914	81,675	98%	
45 Other Revenues	248	7,166	-	-	-	7,414	12,600	59%	(5)
46 Notes:									
47 (1) Budget estimate incorrectly calculated.									
48 (2) Generally received in January.									
49 (3) Reflects low attendance at Sunday Concert.									
50 (4) Possible coding error.									
51 (5) No corporate picnics booked.									
52									
53 Total Fair Revenues	\$ 100,881	\$ 259,421	\$ -	\$ 11,902	\$ -	\$ 372,204	\$ 468,700	79%	
54 Fair Expenses									
55 Personal Services	\$ 6,634	\$ 13,007	\$ 11,481	\$ 16,950	\$ 11,577	\$ 59,649	\$ 184,548	32%	(6)
56 Supplies	8,558	1,750	529	16	6	10,859	12,500	87%	
57 Professional Services	20,577	41,458	13,880	750	(1,230)	75,435	72,000	105%	
58 Advertising, Promotions, etc.	88,278	3,416	-	-	1,784	93,478	100,000	93%	
59 Printing	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,000	0%	
60 Communications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
61 Utilities	-	1,936	1,099	-	-	3,035	14,000	22%	
62 Repair & Maintenance	-	2,773	14	-	-	2,787	2,500	111%	
63 Rentals	1,178	3,997	173	-	-	5,348	8,000	67%	
64 Dues and memberships	-	-	-	-	-	-	750	0%	
65 Travel and Training	-	-	-	613	210	823	4,500	18%	
66 Insurance	13,009	-	-	-	-	13,009	13,250	98%	
67 Postage	-	-	-	-	-	-	900	0%	
68 Printing	1,198	-	-	-	-	1,198	-		
69 Telephone	506	800	-	-	-	1,306	2,500	52%	
70 Other/Special Expenses	77,987	23,174	2,811	1,325	19,876	125,173	132,650	94%	
71 Awards	27,996	11,826	(1,570)	-	2,476	40,728	46,150	88%	
72 Indirect	-	3,319	-	510	3,319	7,148	14,436	50%	
73 Capital	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
74 Notes:									
75 (6) October included three pay periods.									
76									
77 Total Fairtime Expenses	\$ 245,920	\$ 107,456	\$ 28,417	\$ 20,164	\$ 38,019	\$ 439,976	\$ 611,684	72%	
78									
79 Net Fairtime Revenues/Expenses	\$ (145,040)	\$ 151,965	\$ (28,417)	\$ (8,262)	\$ (38,019)	\$ (67,772)	\$ (142,984)	47%	

3

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR COMPLEX
Budget Overview July - November 2004

Description	July 2004	August 2004	September 2004	October 2004	November 2004	Year to Date 2004/05	Adopted 2004-05	12/13/04 %
80 Rodeo Revenues								
81 Admissions	\$ 2,679	\$ 34,752	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	37,431	\$ 50,600	74%
82 Sponsorships	150	22,922	-	6,900	(1,750)	28,222	57,600	49% (1)
83 Queen Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,750	0% (2)
84 Miscellaneous	765	628	-	-	-	1,393	3,000	46%
85								
86 Notes:								
87 (1) Sponsor fee abated for Bright Side Electric.								
87 (2) Generally received in January.								
88								
89 Total Rodeo Revenues	\$ 3,594	\$ 58,302	\$ -	\$ 6,900	\$ (1,750)	\$ 67,046	\$ 112,950	59%
90								
91 Rodeo Expenses								
92 Supplies	\$ 2,861	\$ 121	\$ (407)	\$ -	\$ -	2,575	\$ 3,000	86%
93 Professional Services	14,351	488	1,046	-	1,229	17,114	16,375	105%
94 Advertising	448	2,492	468	-	-	3,408	5,000	68%
95 Rentals	7,142	1,402	-	1,325	-	9,869	10,000	99%
96 Training and Travel	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,500	
97 Stock Contract	20,000	-	-	-	-	20,000	22,000	91%
98 Other Misc Expenses	1,855	1,293	604	-	590	4,342	10,000	43%
99 Awards/Prizes	35,850	770	-	-	-	36,620	35,500	103%
100								
101 Total Rodeo Expenses	\$ 82,508	\$ 6,566	\$ 1,711	\$ 1,325	\$ 1,819	\$ 93,929	\$ 104,375	90%
102								
103 Net Rodeo Revenues/Expenses	\$ (78,913)	\$ 51,736	\$ (1,711)	\$ 5,575	\$ (3,569)	\$ (26,882)	\$ 8,575	

WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR COMPLEX
Budget Overview July - November 2004

									12/13/04
Description	July 2004	August 2004	September 2004	October 2004	November 2004	Year to Date 2004/05	Adopted 2004-05	%	
104 Frite Lites									
105 Frite Lite Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 600	\$ 16,530	\$ 25,587	\$ 42,717	\$ 60,500	71%	
106 Frite Lite Expenses	-	434	2,008	25,480	1,815	29,737	38,750	77%	
107									
108 Net Frite Lites Revenues/Expenses	\$0	(\$434)	(\$1,408)	(\$8,950)	\$23,772	\$12,980	\$21,750	60%	
109									
110									
111 Non-Operating									
112									
113 Non-Operating Revenues									
114 Hotel/Motel Taxes	\$ -	\$ 4,536	\$ 3,888	\$ 118,142	\$ 37,591	\$ 164,157	\$ 518,000	32%	
115 Interest	471	613	454	458	342	2,338	5,000	47%	
116									
117 Total Non-Operating Revenues	\$471	\$5,149	\$4,342	\$118,600	\$37,933	\$166,495	\$523,000	32%	
118									
119 Non-Operating Expenses									
120									
121 Purchase/Lease	\$ 613	\$ 613	\$ 613	\$ 613	\$ 613	\$ 3,065	\$ 67,790	5%	(1)
122 Land Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
123 Buildings and Structures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
124 Equipment	8,889	(1,493)	-	-	-	7,396	15,044	49%	
125 Development Reserve	936	-	1,709	2,997	1,761	7,403	50,000	15%	
126									
127 Notes:									
128 (Includes Quadrant Property Loan, Frite Lites Loan, and Mower Lease.									
129									
130 Total Non-Operating Expenses	\$10,438	(\$880)	\$2,322	\$3,610	\$2,374	\$17,864	\$132,834	13%	
131									
132 Net Non-Operating Revenues/Expenses	(\$9,967)	\$6,029	\$2,020	\$114,990	\$35,559	\$148,631	\$390,166	38%	
133									
134 Net Fair Complex Revenues/Expenses	(\$252,760)	\$206,754	(\$48,711)	\$76,031	\$17,681	(\$1,006)	(\$8,979)	11%	
135									
136 Ending Fund Balance/Contingency	\$145,239	\$351,993	\$303,282	\$375,413	\$393,093		\$370,778		
Note: Difference in September ending Fund Balance and October beginning fund balance of \$3,898.37 is due to A/P entries made for August and September after prior reports were run.									

Washington County Fair Complex
Balance Sheet
30-Nov-04

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash

Fairplex..Petty cash..	\$ 200
Fairplex..Cash drawer.Frite Lites.	500
Fairplex..General Cash Account..	86,683
Fairplex..USNB WASHCO ACH Clearing..	-
Fairplex..CCB-General Account..	6,745
Fairplex..CCB-Money Market Account..	290,686
Fairplex..CCB-ATM Account..	9,685
Total Cash	\$ 394,499

Accounts Receivable

Fairplex..Accounts receivable - Sub..	\$ 36,946
Total Receivable	\$ 36,946

Total Current Assets

\$ 431,444

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Fairplex..Accounts Payable..	\$ (28,787)
Fairplex..Accounts payable- other..	-
Fairplex..Deposits payable-subsidia..	(745)
Total Payables	\$ (29,532)

Other Current Liabilities

Fairplex..Deferred revenue- unavail..	\$ -
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne..	5,744
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Main Exhibit Hall.	-
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Cloverleaf Building.	(468)
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Grounds/General.	2,095
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Deferred Advertising Inco.	-
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Deferred Airshow Income.	-
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Deferred Commercial Exhib.	(1,150)
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Deferred Concession Reven.	-
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Deferred Sponsorship Inco.	1,800
Fairplex..Deferred revenue -unearne.Deferred Facilities Renta.	(16,838)
Total Deferred Revenues	\$ (8,817)

Total Liabilities

\$ (38,349)

Equity

Fairplex..Fund Balance..	\$ (375,414)
Net Income/Loss for the Period	(17,682)
Net Equity	\$ (393,095)

Total Liabilities and Equity

\$ (431,444)

NEW BUSINESS

County of Washington

Washington County Fair Complex
873 NE 34th Avenue
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
Phone: (503) 648-1416
Fax: (503) 648-7208
donh@faircomplex.com
www.faircomplex.com

FAX MEMORANDUM

Date: December 15, 2004

To: Washington County Fair Complex Board
Washington County Fair Complex

From: Don G. Hillman, Executive Director
Washington County Fair Complex

Re: 2005 Air Show Dates

The Oregon International Air Show dates for 2005 have been released. The dates will be September 9-11, 2005. The Air Force Thunderbirds will be featured along with the Army's Golden Knights Parachute Team.

The 2005 Air Show dates conflict with the Hardy Plant Sale that is held over the same weekend. Last year, we were successful in moving the event planned for the air show weekend to another weekend. Staff does not know if this will be acceptable with the Hardy Plant Sale. They have been on this weekend for years and have developed quite a following. This is also a major income-producing event for their exhibitors who are mostly local. Staff doubts if they can manage around the Air Show with the impact on the parking lots and closure of Cornell Road at various times.

Direction from the Board on this matter would be appreciated.

County of Washington

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873 NE 34th Avenue
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
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FAX MEMORANDUM

Date: December 15, 2004

To: Washington County Fair Complex Board
Washington County Fair Complex

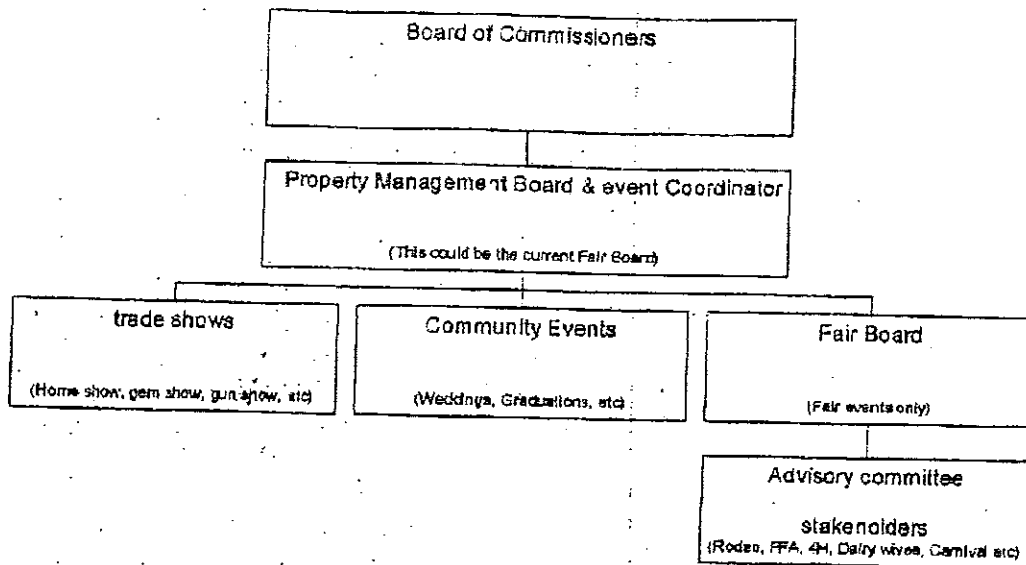
From: Don G. Hillman, Executive Director
Washington County Fair Complex

Re: Proposed Reorganizational Structure

Members of the Save the Fair Coalition recently met with members of the County Board of Commissioners. As an outcome of that meeting, the Coalition proposed the attached new organizational structure for the Fair Complex. Staff has been asked to comment on the proposed structure.

Comments from the Board on this matter would be appreciated.

Proposed reorganizational structure



This structure has the potential to mobilize volunteers and encourage input from those who are most closely associated with the Fair event. It would also relieve Fairboard members of the duties of dealing with other events throughout the year. The advisory committee to the Fair should involve members of different aspects of the event. It could take the form of either ex-officio membership on the Fair Board itself or a separate and distinct subcommittee. In either case, the membership would be appointed from their own respective organizations. The seven voting members of the Fair Board will continue to be appointed by the Board of Commissioners as per Oregon statute. This structure allows those who may have a limited knowledge of management, yet a strong association with the Fair event, to actively participate in its production.

There are also many negative issues to be dealt with. The potential conflicts between governing bodies is probable, but could be limited through a clear set of duties and guidelines for each. A change in revenue streams would likely create the most impact on the event. Separating the Fair from other events, and even from the management of the property, could reduce economies of scale and subsidization of the Fair.

These issues should be looked at with a clear and objective look to examine the potential benefits and pitfalls of a major change.

Lastly, it should be noted that while the chart does not show it, the seven members of the Fair Board will continue to be answerable directly to the Board of Commissioners as Oregon law directs.

CORRESPONDENCE



WASHINGTON COUNTY

OREGON

Fair Complex

December 15, 2004

Honorable Jerry Krummel
House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Krummel:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Washington County Fair & Rodeo.

I appreciate your concern and comments regarding the involvement of volunteers.

As to Mr. Spiesschaert's comments, if you were to take the time to review the attendance figures of the Washington County Fair & Rodeo over the last fifteen years or so, I believe most would agree with his assessment. It is also important to note that Mr. Spiesschaert held a leadership role with the Washington County Fair Complex during part of that time.

Case in point, at the beginning of the 1990's, the Washington County Fair & Rodeo was attracting well over 50,000 paid attendees. Ten years later, after the County had experienced unprecedented growth, the 2000 Washington County Fair & Rodeo was attracting less than 44,000 paid attendees. Had the Washington County Fair & Rodeo paid attendance just kept pace with its population growth during the decade of the 1990's, paid attendance would have been well over 70,000 as it entered the new millennium. To exacerbate this problem even more, the decrease in attendance correlated to decreased revenues and by the late 1990's, the cost to produce the annual County Fair far exceeded the revenues it generated.

It should be obvious to most that the this "downward spiral" and failure to "meet the expectations of the county's citizens and customers" did not occur overnight, but began many years ago when attendance at the annual Washington County Fair & Rodeo did not keep pace with the County's growing population and actually lost market share. Based on the declining fair attendance experienced in the 1990's, its apparent that no one paid attention to the needs and expectations of those thousands of new Washington County residents, resulting in those residents being underserved by programs and activities developed for the annual County Fair & Rodeo.

Honorable Jerry Krummel
December 15, 2004

It should also be obvious that there are those that wanted the annual Fair County Fair & Rodeo to remain a 'western' Washington County event. A quick review of our current volunteer ranks would reveal that there are few volunteers, if any, who live in eastern Washington County or represent the interests of those that have moved to Washington County over the last ten years or so. Some continue believe that the annual County Fair is a summer reunion for farmers in western Washington County and should stay that way.

On a more positive note, the Board of County Commissioners appointed three new Fair Complex Board members during 2004 and has approved an increase in the number of board members from five to seven. The two additional board members will be seated in January 2005.

It has been my observation that the current board members, and those to be seated in January, are well aware of the tasks ahead. Foremost in their minds is representing the interests of all Washington County residents by managing the public facility in a responsible and fiscally sound manner, as well as, producing an annual County Fair & Rodeo that meets the expectations of county residents.

In closing, after a decade of unprecedented growth in Washington County coupled with declining fair attendance, it is more important than ever to responsibly address these needs.

Thanks again for your comments.

Sincerely
WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR COMPLEX



Don G. Hillman CFE
Executive Director

Cc: Washington County Commissioners
Washington County Fair Complex Board Members
Lyle Spiesschaert

JERRY KRUMMEL
State Representative

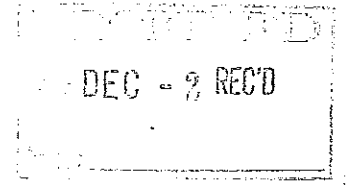
DISTRICT 26



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OREGON 97301

November 23, 2004

Mr. Don Hillman
Director, Washington County Fair and Rodeo
Washington County Fair Complex
873 NE 34th Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97124



Dear Don:

This letter regards the future operations of the Washington County Fair and Rodeo. I realize there are solid financial reasons to dissect and rebuild this annual community event. I have seen news reports, talked with constituents and reviewed your November 3rd 2004 memo assigning all responsibilities in planning and managing the annual Washington County Rodeo as an additional responsibility to the paid Fair Staff, and assigning all sponsorship development to a paid contractor who is also the advertising agency of record to the Washington County Fair and Rodeo.

I am also aware of the potential efficiencies of hiring a stock contractor to manage all production elements.

On a larger scale, I have seen Mr. Lyle Spiesschaert's November 21, 2003 memo noting concerns regarding the lack of direction the Fair Board has provided, which has resulted, in the opinion of numerous individuals, in "...a county fair that continues a downward spiral and often fails to meet the expectations of the county's citizens and customers."

It is my understanding several groups involved in various Washington County Fair activities have formed a "Fair Coalition" of private citizens, many of whom are long standing volunteers to the Washington County Fair.

It has also come to my attention the relationship between the long standing Washington County Rodeo Board and committees has deteriorated over time. This was culminated when a requested business plan was not delivered to the Fair and Rodeo board by the initial deadline and a subsequent extension request on November 3, 2004, was met, when the extension request was made, with your memo reassigning all Rodeo responsibilities and disbanding this community and business-based group.



As the legislative representative to many citizens of Washington County, some of whom contacted me regarding their Fair and Rodeo, I am interested in seeing appropriate citizen involvement balance be maintained which will allow the historical individual volunteer interest, expertise and commitment be nurtured and appropriately and respectfully applied to this event.

Volunteers have been the lifeblood of these community events: their expertise is often far superior in depth and breadth to hired staff as well as to out of state-based contractors. Volunteers' passion is contagious in garnering community support and interest as an adjunct to paid advertising. In my legislative experience, citizens who volunteer in schools, service agencies and other tax-supported entities often provide the defining word in our budget hearings. Their expertise gives us operating perspective; their individual experience with state employees provides a broad view of resource management, community responsibility and individual ethics.

I trust this process to re-define the Washington County Fair and Rodeo will include community volunteers as knowledgeable managers, planners and representatives as well as "boots on the ground" labor.

I appreciate your time and consideration to my input. I also appreciate the difficulty in managing the overall financial integrity of the operation of the Washington County Fair Grounds; from Monster Trucks to Fright Lights! My hope is you will give scrutiny to all aspects of the fair and in this process not turn away from your citizen volunteers but rather nurture this relationship.

Sincerely,

Representative Jerry Krummel



cc: Washington County Commission
Lyle Spiesschaert

OTHER MATTERS OF INFORMATION

**OregonLive.com**

Everything Oregon

Halfway's money woes come full circle

The town that once changed its name for a quick dot-com buck finds itself forced to sell its pavilion and maybe the fairgrounds

Sunday, December 12, 2004

RICHARD COCKLE

HALFWAY – Disappointment has replaced the heady excitement of the town's Half.com days as it faces the loss of its fair pavilion to creditors this month.

And the 83-year-old fairgrounds could be next.

The Internet marketing gimmick attracted an international buzz – and helped fuel unrealistic plans to build the vast pavilion without enough grant money to see the project through.

"Apparently, they were counting their chickens before they were hatched," said Dale Taylor, new board president of the Pine Valley Fair Association. "Boom! The grants dried up."

The metal pavilion – at 45,600 square feet – is the largest building in Halfway. Since its completion in 2001, it's been used for horse shows, athletic events and 4-H cattle exhibits and even to shelter Cycle Oregon participants during a rainstorm.

The building is the centerpiece of the 9-acre fairgrounds and the focal point of community life in Halfway in the summertime. The fairgrounds host a junior rodeo each July and the Baker County Fair and Panhandle Rodeo in September.

But the pavilion is scheduled for a sheriff's sale Thursday to pay off creditors. If the sale doesn't cover the debt, then the fairgrounds could go on the block, too.

Complicating an already bad situation, the fair association is missing financial records and meeting minutes on the pavilion deal – a result of its loose organization in the past, Taylor said.

"You could try to go through and look at the budget, but you couldn't find anything," he said. "They didn't even have a treasurer."

Halfway, population 345, is wedged into a mountain valley a few miles from the Oregon-Idaho boundary and just south of the juncture of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

The town became known worldwide in 2000 when it accepted \$73,000 from a Philadelphia-based online bazaar called www.half.com to change its name to Half.com for a year.

Tourists flocked here and phone lines at City Hall were tied up for months with calls from news organizations asking about the town's status as the world's first "Internet city." The gambit paid off for www.half.com, which sold books, CDs, movies and the like for half price. Auction pioneer eBay paid \$300 million to buy the company.

In that supercharged atmosphere, Halfway fair leaders sought and got grants from various

foundations totaling \$428,997 to build the pavilion, said Patti Huff, a recently elected member of the Halfway City Council. The city administered the grants.

That was enough money to cover half of the pavilion construction. The community hoped to secure additional grants to finish the work, Huff said.

General contractor Mike Becker of La Grande signed a memorandum of understanding to keep his construction costs within the original budget, said Gordon Kaesemeyer, mayor-elect of Halfway.

But after the fair paid Becker for the first phase of the project, he proceeded to build the entire pavilion, with the apparent expectation of receiving more grants, Taylor said.

Becker said he signed no contract for the second phase, calling it "a deal among honorable men."

Ralph Smead, 80, then president of the fair association, said Becker "took a calculated risk and went ahead and built the building" without getting the association's go-ahead.

Just weeks after Becker completed the work in August 2001, the Sept. 11 terror attacks staggered the U.S. economy, grants grew scarce and no more money came through, Huff said.

"That just shut us down," she said. "It just closed every door for two or three years. By then it was too late."

So, the following March, the general contractor asked Smead to sign a promissory note for \$428,996 owed on the pavilion. Smead and other fair association members signed the document with the proviso that the association had two years to come up with the money, Becker and Smead said.

The deadline passed this past spring, and Becker sold the note to Willamette Valley Construction Financing and Collection Service LLC of Portland. Now Willamette wants \$430,415, plus other fees and \$106,247 interest, which is growing at \$117.92 a day.

"I felt bad about the deal. I still do," Becker said. "We had a huge chunk of our working capital in the building and we had to do something. . . . It's what I had to do to keep it from bankrupting me, basically. My pockets are not that deep."

Becker estimated that the pavilion and the 6 acres it occupies are worth \$2 million. The fairgrounds' assessed value is \$130,000, but it would cost the community considerably more to replace, Taylor said. It encompasses a rustic rodeo arena, horse barn, exhibit hall, bucking chutes, racetrack and food booths at the south end of town.

When the pavilion was built, Smead said, the fair association was organized differently and operated without a board of directors. Since then, community interest has grown in the association, and it has rewritten bylaws and has an elected board.

Still, the fair association operates on a shoestring, Taylor said, and its only income comes from the fair and rodeo. "Usually by the end of the year, we are broke," he said.

In the meantime, Willamette has seized the fair association's bank accounts, Taylor said. The group had to borrow about \$5,000 to pay rodeo contestants in September, he said.

Willamette representatives declined to return repeated telephone calls for comment.

Taylor said the creditor has rejected two settlement offers, and the fair association has hired an attorney. If the city loses the pavilion and fairgrounds, the association probably will put on the fair and rodeos at a ranch near Halfway in a portable arena and tents, he said.

"We're still going to have a fair," Taylor said.

Smead said he's sorry all this has happened.

"I wish I personally could do something," he said. "I couldn't even think about having that kind of money. I did buy a lottery ticket."

Richard Cockle: 541-963-8890; rcockle@ucinet.com

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**OregonLive.com**

Everything Oregon

3 concepts proposed for airport expansion

An updated master plan is expected by spring to guide the state's second-largest airport through the next 20 years

Friday, December 03, 2004

ESMERALDA BERMUDEZ

HILLSBORO -- By 2025, Hillsboro Airport's parking lot could include as much as one-fourth of the Washington County Fair Complex, and expected growth in flights and aircraft could require a costly move of Northwest Cornell Road.

The Port of Portland, the airport's operator, has crafted three packages to prepare for increasing demand. Those alternatives -- which could include turning about 25 acres of nearby fairgrounds into parking space and moving Northwest Evergreen Road again -- were reviewed by the master plan committee Thursday night.

The committee, consisting of airport operators and users, business owners and community members, told Port officials they don't want Evergreen Road to be moved and would like to seek county approval before signing off on the relocation of Cornell Road.

If approved, the changes would become part of the airport's master plan, a blueprint that will address airport demand and community concerns for the next 20 years. The Port and committee have been working for a year to update the plan and expect to complete it in the spring.

The upgrades would be phased in over time as demand increases and would depend on whether the Port can find money, which would generally come from a series of Port and Federal Aviation Administration grants. By 2025, Port officials expect the number of aircraft based at Hillsboro Airport, Oregon's second-largest airport, to increase from 363 to 465. The number of takeoffs and landings is expected to rise from 224,000 in 2003 to 323,000.

During the past year, the committee has gathered to review the nuts and bolts of the airport, including its role, inventory, demand and capacity.

On Thursday, after an open house Wednesday, the Port unveiled three development packages, ranging from \$52.9 million to \$126 million. All three options, which take into account land and air demands, call for a series of upgrades, including a new runway spanning 3,600 feet. That runway, which Port officials have wanted to build for more than a decade, would be built on the north end of the airport parallel to the existing 6,600-foot runway and perpendicular to another existing 4,049-foot runway. It would be used solely for landing small-engine aircraft.

That would allow larger business jets to land more quickly on the longest runway, said Daren Griffin, general aviation manager for the Port of Portland.

"We would spend less time circling in the pattern, wasting gas and creating noise," Griffin said. With each alternative, noise levels -- which will be addressed by the Port in the coming months along with environmental concerns -- will spread out over a larger area.

The noise, however, will still remain within airport property, Griffin said.

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In addition to a third runway, all three packages call for a series of new taxiways, about 367,950 square feet more of hangar space, relocation of the terminal and more parking for cars and aircraft.

Alternative A, costing about \$52.9 million, proposes the fewest changes, adding a new runway and several taxiways and hangars. Alternative B, which would cost about \$90.8 million, would include moving Northwest Cornell Road -- which currently runs along the airport's southern edge -- about 400 feet south and acquiring about 25 acres of fairgrounds land -- currently across Cornell -- to make space for car and aircraft parking, along with business buildings.

It also would include shifting the smaller runway about 235 feet toward the east and relocating the terminal closer to the MAX light-rail station, which is next to Northwest 34th Avenue and Cornell.

Alternative C, which would cost between \$101.4 million and \$126 million, includes two options. One consists of buying about 90 acres of mostly agricultural and industrial land north of the airport to build a new flight pattern known as Charlie -- the existing Charlie pattern has been active for about a month and is located parallel to the 6,600-foot runway, close to where the new runway would be built.

To keep up with an expected increase in flights and to segregate helicopter flights, a new Charlie pattern would need to be built on the northeast end of the airport, Griffin said.

If so, that would mean more noise along that end of the airport, Griffin said.

Henry Oberhelman, who lives along the airport's north edge, worries that may mean more disruption for him.

"We're going to be right below the flight area," said Oberhelman, who is a member of the Washington County Residents for Safe & Quiet Skies and Concerned Residents Against Student Helicopters, a group lobbying against helicopter noise at the airport. Oberhelman also worries about the impact airport growth will have on small business in the area.

Wink Brooks, a city planning director who sits on the master plan committee representing Hillsboro, told Port officials to consider scaling back on acquiring 90 acres. The city, he said, hopes to expand industrial land north of the airport and would like as much space possible. Alternative C also calls for building the new 3,600-foot runway farther north of the airport, which would require that Northwest Evergreen Road be moved. About 2,500 feet of the road, which was last moved in 2001, would shift about 300 feet to the north.

Like package B, part of package C includes turning part of the fairgrounds into parking and business space. Another C option includes pushing aircraft parking space closer to the airfield and moving a series of new hangars toward the north end of the airport.

In the coming months, Port officials plan to refine the package, which may include a combination of alternatives from the three packages. The project committee will meet again in March.

Esmeralda Bermudez: 503-221-4388; ebermudez@news.oregonian.com

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November 28, 2004

Back from the Brink: Families of children who contracted E. coli count blessings — and bills

By Randi Bjornstad
The Register-Guard

Lane County officials breathed a sigh of relief in October when 23 plaintiffs - mostly parents of children who contracted E. coli infections at the 2002 Lane County Fair - dropped their lawsuit against the county, two weeks before trial.

Forward story

Printer-friendly version

They no doubt relaxed again earlier this month when the statute of limitations deadline expired, barring any of the victims of the outbreak - including the lone holdout from the lawsuit - from suing the county again in the matter.



But if the county, free from the legal threat of financial obligation for the episode, now can put the unpleasantness behind it, many of the families whose children endured life-threatening cases of the illness say they cannot.

Some still struggle financially because of the out-of-pocket expenses they incurred for medical and other services during their children's treatment at hospitals in Eugene or Portland. Even more serious, at least four of the dozen children hospitalized following the E. coli outbreak face the possibility of future kidney failure - even the necessity of an organ transplant - as they approach adulthood.



Carson Walter, a victim of a severe E.

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The parents also say that despite improved signs and the installation of hand-washing stations at the Lane County Fair since 82 people contracted E. coli traced to the fair two years ago, they fear another outbreak may happen eventually.

coli infection, shows off one of her stuffed toys.

Because the Lane County outbreak may have been caused, at least in some cases, by airborne bacteria directly breathed in or ingested by those taken ill, relying on hand-washing isn't enough to prevent future tragedies, these parents believe. One way to curb the disease might be to exclude cud-chewing animals - E. coli epidemics nearly always trace back to cattle - from county and state fair exhibitions, where there are so many infants and children, who are particularly susceptible to E. coli.

"Until you stand in an intensive care unit, holding your 18-month-old and not knowing if he will live or die, you can't know what it was like to go through this," said Tom Keating, whose twin toddlers contracted the illness at the fair, Sean mildly and Ryan severely.

The experience "reshaped my views of a lot of things," Keating said, including laws such as those in Oregon "that shelter public agencies from liability so that these tragedies can keep on happening."

Some county officials acknowledge they feel uncomfortable with laws that protect the county while leaving families to bear the burden of the outbreak.

Several said they would consider helping the families financially, if that's legal.

From the brink of death

Sitting on her mother's lap reading a book or romping with her father and brother in the family's ranch-style Eugene home, 4-year-old Carson Walter doesn't look like a child who lay at the brink of death two years ago.

Her white-blond ringlets and wide eyes belie a streak of mischief and a preschooler's knack for vaulting from tantrums to giggles in the blink of an eye. A pink plastic Barbie vanity table - a favorite gift from her Sept. 28 birthday - occupies a corner of the living room.

Her mother, Shelly Walter, admits she probably treats Carson differently after the little girl spent 31 days in intensive care at Portland's Doernbecher Children's Hospital, suffering through weeks of severe abdominal cramps, bloody diarrhea and 17 rounds of kidney dialysis.

Carson still takes medication for high



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blood pressure - a common aftereffect of severe E. coli infection - and has not regained full kidney function.

"When I'm faced with a situation where I need to discipline her, I always stop and think that I'm lucky to have her at all," Walter says. "I know I'm softer on her than I would have been otherwise."



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Bill Walter says he thinks constantly of what his daughter went through and what she might have to endure in the future.

Bill and Shelly Walter say they cherish the moments they spend with their daughter, Carson, who spent 31 days in intensive care in 2002. "She has the worst long-term prognosis of any of the children who got E. coli at the Lane County Fair," Bill Walter says.

"We don't talk about it with other people as much as we used to, but I think about it multiple times every day," he said. "She has the worst long-term prognosis of any of the children who got E. coli at the Lane County Fair.

Photos: Kevin Clark / The Register-Guard

We've been told she has up to an 85 percent chance of needing a kidney transplant by the time she's an adult. We just don't know how all of this will affect her ability to get an education or work or live a normal life."

The family had a good health insurance policy that covered most of the \$125,000 in medical bills for Carson's care and recovery, but they've paid at least \$14,000 out-of-pocket, Bill Walter said.

"We were fortunate - it was a financial burden at the time of her illness, but we were able to handle it," he said. "But there's a lot of financial stress in not knowing what the situation will be for her later."

The Walters and other parents worry about what would happen if they change jobs and their health insurance changes. They also wonder who will pick up the costs if kidney ailments crop up after the children become adults.

"My husband couldn't even think of quitting his job now or moving to another one - we have to keep our group insurance," said Stacey Harris, whose daughter Jessica contracted one of the most severe E. coli infections at the Lane County Fair.

The family still hasn't recovered from the out-of-pocket expenses associated with Jessica's care, Harris said.

"It wasn't just the co-pays and medication, it was also all the gas and lodging and food. It put us way behind, and we've never been able to catch up - when you can't pay on time, you end up paying even more. I get calls from bill collectors all the time."

Because of her family's straitened circumstances, Harris now qualifies for WIC, the federal women, infants and children's program that

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provides vouchers for nutritional foods for low-income families.

"This has been a huge emotional stress, a huge financial stress," she said. "And then to find out the lawsuit had to be dismissed was just crushing. I haven't gotten over that yet."

Dropping the lawsuit

Advising his clients to drop their suit came hard to Seattle attorney William Marler, but after much research and dozens of depositions of Lane County officials, members of the affected families and experts in the field of E. coli transmission, he saw no other choice.

In 2002, when the Lane County outbreak happened, "airborne or dustborne transmission of E. coli was still a novel concept," Marler said. "Whether that's exactly how these people got the infection, we just don't know. Some washed their hands, others didn't. Some touched animals, others didn't. Some of the children walked through the barns, some never got out of their strollers. We just couldn't pinpoint, 'This is what the fair didn't do, this is what they should have done.' Without that, we couldn't win a lawsuit."

He and the families wanted more than just a financial settlement.

"Most state, county and local entities are either immune from lawsuits or have caps on awards," Marler said. "There's very little economic incentive for them to change. I'm not suggesting that all award caps should be removed, but I think government officials should look at these situations as if it were their grandkids who had the problem."

If they did, Kevin Closson believes, it might cut E. coli outbreaks in the future. Closson's daughter, Madeline, then 3, spent two weeks in Legacy Emanuel Hospital in Portland, undergoing daily dialysis treatments for a week and requiring blood transfusions.

"During dialysis ... they suck the blood out, clean it up, cool it down and put it back in," Closson said. "It takes several hours, which is one thing for an adult but way too much for a little child, so they have to put them under anesthesia to do it. At one point, in one day, Maddy was under three times. The money wasn't as big a thing to us as witnessing what all that did to our 3-year-old's body."

Like several of the other children, Maddy experienced such violent diarrhea that she had rectal prolapse, a condition in which intestinal tissue becomes expelled along with feces during the severe muscular spasms.



A favorite toy for Carson Walter is a vanity table that she received for her fourth birthday. Two years ago, she was in Portland's Doernbecher Children's Hospital with E. coli poisoning.

"Do you know what they do about rectal prolapse?" Closson asked. "They get the tissue back inside, and they tape the buttocks shut. Do you know what that would be like for a little kid, and what it's like when they have to tear that tape off again?"

Closson wants public officials to know all this.

"By participating in a lawsuit, I just wanted those goofballs (county officials) to do two things: to cover the monetary damages and to belly up to the bar, take their licking and then get the news out so this won't happen to other children in the future," Closson said. "If they'd had to pay out a couple million dollars to cover the families' expenses, then fairs all over the country might start paying attention."

Lane County commissioners are cautious about the legal and ethical aspects of the case.

Bill Dwyer said the issue "kind of puts the county in a bind."

"It bothers me that kids got sick at the fairgrounds, but it was something we couldn't foresee - it was a crazy, unfortunate event," he said. "But I wouldn't be averse to having the families who have suffered hardship to appeal directly to the board (of commissioners) to see if there's some way we could help. We have no legal obligation to help, but I believe government has moral obligations to its citizens."

Peter Sorenson said he also would be willing to take a look at the county's responsibilities with regard to the children most damaged by the E. coli outbreak.

"It becomes an issue of protecting the lawful position of the county and the right of taxpayers," Sorenson said. "But that doesn't mean we shouldn't look at the compassionate aspect of the situation. I would want to get a written opinion from the (state) attorney general to see what we have the right to do."

Commissioners Bobby Green, Don Hampton and Anna Morrison worry about the precedent that would be set if the county offered financial help to families, Green calling it a "humongous risk" and Morrison calling it a "Pandora's box that could be dangerous to open."

Green said county officials don't want to seem "insensitive."

"We have done things to make sure this doesn't happen again. From the legal standpoint, there's not much more we can do," Green said. "As for the moral issue, that's very different. We are sorry this happened. People were harmed, and we're not trying to find a way out of acknowledging that. It's been a tough situation."

Morrison fears a big burden to the county.

"I'm distressed that (the outbreak) happened, but there are just some things we have no control over and that we're not legally responsible for," Morrison said. "For us to be sorry, I have no problem with that. But if we go beyond the things we can do to make the fairgrounds operation as clean as possible, then where does it end? How much are we talking about, and for how long?"

Expert on E. coli

Attorney Marler - who says he's spent 11 years "representing little kids with E. coli" - believes that neither society as a whole nor fair operations around the country have been paying enough attention to E. coli O157:H7, the strain that infected Lane County fairgoers two years ago.

"The fact that these outbreaks happen as often as they do, you eventually have to come to the conclusion that we're not doing enough," he said. "This should never have happened to these little kids." For the families of those most severely affected, "it will be a lifelong matter of keeping their fingers crossed."

This particularly virulent strain of E. coli "was virtually unknown before the early 1980s"; some scientists theorize it mutated because of antibiotic-laced cattle feeds, Marler said.

About half of the E. coli-infected children he sees - usually a dozen or more each year - require dialysis that puts them at risk for long-term kidney ailments, says Dr. Randy Jenkins, director of pediatric nephrology at Legacy Emanuel Hospital in Portland.

"Of kids who have Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, 38 percent will have the risk of low kidney function or failure," Jenkins said. "They also have a greater risk for diabetes, gallstones and bowel stricture. The longer the time that they don't produce urine during the infection, the greater the risk. If it's more than 10 days, they're much more likely to experience kidney failure in the long term."

E. coli "is really a toxin problem," Jenkins said. The bacteria damage kidney filters that cleanse the blood of waste. "Fortunately, we're built with significant reserve - we can get by with one kidney or with diminished function in both kidneys as long as it doesn't go below 50 percent," he said.

However, kidneys that don't function normally must work harder, and the pressure placed on them can create more scarring of the remaining filters, leading eventually - sometimes in the range of 10 to 20 years - to acute kidney failure, Jenkins said.

Last month, 40 people contracted E. coli at the North Carolina State Fair in Raleigh, with more than 100 additional cases under study. Contact with animals in a petting zoo appears to be the most likely cause.

The list of E. coli O157:H7 outbreaks has grown long since the strain

first became identified in the early 1980s.

Lane County's episode constitutes one of the largest; of 82 people sickened, 74 received firm diagnoses. About two-thirds of the cases involved children younger than 6; 22 required hospitalization, and 12 developed Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, a complication involving some degree of kidney failure that occasionally can be fatal.

Marler's research found E. coli outbreaks in 1998 at the Puyallup Fair in Washington state; a fair in Washington County, New York, in 1999 where 781 people became ill and two died because of a contaminated water supply; at a large agricultural fair in Ontario, Canada, in 1999; a petting zoo in Snohomish County, Wash., in 2000; the Medina County (Ohio) Fair, also in 2000; and county fairs in Wisconsin and Ohio in 2001.

However, fair officials resist the idea of excluding cud-chewing animals from county and state fair exhibitions.

"I gave a talk at the University of Oregon Law School in a tort class and talked about my work with E. coli outbreaks at fairs, and it was amazing how many students stood up and said, 'You're going to ruin county fairs for everybody,'" Marler said.

They don't seem to understand that children who have suffered severe Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome "never get their lives back," he said.

"Somehow, we continue to divorce ourselves from the reality of what these outbreaks do to little children.

"It's time to take a deep breath and ask ourselves, 'Is this the right thing to do, given the risks?'"

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Everything Oregon

Hall aims to boost use of the fairgrounds

Planners hope it will bring people to the Clark County site year-round

Wednesday, November 24, 2004

BILL STEWART

RIDGEFIELD, Wash. -- Any way you look at it, the Clark County Fairgrounds' new exhibit hall is big: Nearly three city blocks long, wider than a football field and 30 feet to the lowest rafter.

And maybe the biggest deal of all? The toilets. They're expandable. Well, not the loos themselves, but rather the number of them.

The hall otherwise is utilitarian and plain, though in less than four months it will be festooned with banners, signs, booths and other trappings of the trade show and convention industry. The \$18.5 million project, officials say, is on time and under budget.

County commissioners are hoping the hall -- and other planned buildings -- will turn the fairgrounds into a year-round center of activities, instead of simply being used for the 10-day fair and a few motorcycle and equestrian events.

Doug Johnston, director of Clark County's general services department, said the gamble is paying off.

"We are getting a lot of calls from people who want to schedule shows," he said. "And we are not the only ones who are optimistic. We have gotten calls from promoters who want to reserve certain dates, then resell them to actual shows."

The project is financed by bonds that will be repaid by show rents and by a slice of the state sales tax earmarked for projects benefiting tourism.

Architect Rob Barrentine, a partner in Barrentine Bates Lee, said a lot of other exposition halls were studied "to see what works and what doesn't."

One feature planners think will work is the expandable restroom, or, better yet, three of them. By sliding a tracked wall panel, a process that takes about 10 minutes, each restroom can expand or shrink by six toilets. That means a gun show, likely attended primarily by men, could have 18 extra stalls for men. A bridal show could need the extra capacity for women.

In the main room, Barrentine said, a pair of folding walls can arrange the building into six room sizes, from almost 100,000 square feet down to about 30,000 square feet, handling one to three events simultaneously.

Three concession areas will provide microwave cooking ability, but planners decided against a commercial kitchen because they "never pay for themselves in this kind of facility," said Tom Musser, executive director of the Clark County Fair.

So, conferences or seminars will need to hire a catering firm if they desire full meals. Musser said a commercial kitchen capable of serving a massive banquet would have cost \$1 million or

(26)

more.

In addition to hiring a caterer, event arrangers will need to rent any needed tables, chairs, sound systems, carpeting or special lighting.

"Before March, we will prepare a list of vendors for show organizers," Johnston said.

Up top, the roof system is engineered so displays weighing as much as 3,000 pounds can be suspended above the crowd from each rafter.

"Let's say you are at a big boat show but have no idea where your favorite boat is on display," Johnston said. "You look up and see one hanging from the ceiling, and (you) know just where to go."

And underfoot, the 8-inch-thick, uncarpeted concrete floor hides its own show secrets. Miles of pipe carry water, drainage, power and computer cables. Empty conduits were run to handle future high-tech additions. Natural gas is available.

For shows with massive displays, or perhaps a high number of large recreation vehicles, there's the fair's carnival area just outside.

A "loading court" includes bays for five semitrailers and 12 spaces for show participants to unload cars and vans. A 25-foot-high door allows big trucks to drive into the show area.

"We will limit indoor traffic," Johnston said, "because we don't want a demolition derby."

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Fair officials, county: Rodeo stands need replacement

By **BUD CHAMBERS/Staff Reporter**

Tuesday, November 23, 2004 1:56 PM CST

No one seems to know the exact age of the rodeo arena's bleachers on the Washington County fairgrounds, but there is agreement among both the leadership of county government and fair association representatives that replacement of the old stands is overdue.

County fairgrounds manager Jeff Hinds indicated today that the main bleacher seating for the arena is outdated, plus seating demand for more events now frequently exceed current capacity.

One of the goals, Hinds said, is to gain at least 500 more seats along with needed modernization - updating to modern safety requirements and to fulfill all standards of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) legislation.

Ideally, Hinds said the project would also expand the rodeo arena's capacity to at least 1,800 seats - up from less than 1,300 currently.

It didn't take a great deal of convincing for Hinds to win commissioners court's unanimous 5-0 approval for funding the project's first \$100,000 - especially once the fairground manager delivered the Washington County Fair Association board's pledge to pick up costs beyond that level.

Hines has already spoken to several possible suppliers and is gearing for a Dec. 21 bid opening in a county court session. This schedule would produce a likely awarding of the winning bid Dec. 28.

"We need to have everything in place for our first major event in May 2005," Hinds told the court.

A second part of the project's equation is a bid for the removal of the present stands - a process which Hinds estimates needs a mid-January completion in order to proceed with beginning new project ground work.

Hinds mentioned two possible options for installation of new stands - both involving a build up related to safety and improved viewing.

Delivery and construction - once the bid is awarded - should require between 60 and 120 days, Hinds indicated.

Judge Dorothy Morgan emphasized that Washington County, as owner and operator of the fairgrounds, continues to see greater demand for its rodeo arena - well beyond the days when the county fair-related rodeo was by far the largest

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event held there each year.

In recent years, several demolition derbies annually - sponsored as civic club fund-raisers - as well as other full scale rodeos or specialized rodeo event competitions (bull riding, calf roping) have played to crowds that exceeded the capacity of these 1970s-era seating facilities.

In other matters before commissioners today, they:

€ Approved the appointment of Milton Tate, mayor of Brenham, to the Brazos County Council of Government's board of directors. He replaces the late Dick Chinnock as Brenham city government's representative.

€ Approved Sheriff J.W. Jankowski's written request to go out for bid on five new vehicles needed by his department in 2005. Bids will be sought on trucks, SUVs and automobiles with a determination to be made later on a combination of up to five vehicles purchased within a \$95,000 budget.

Jankowski was not in attendance due to a family member's illness.

€ Approved two requests from Industry Telephone for buried cable on communications projects - the rights-of-way being approved for projects on Muske-Ullrich Road and Raymond Lehmann Road, both in Precinct 4.



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Child's play spreads E. coli

A pending report may link an outbreak to a petting zoo at the N.C. State Fair



Tim Baldwin kisses his son Matthew goodbye as he leaves for work. Matthew, 4, was exposed to E. coli bacteria. He has been recovering at home and will return to preschool when his stomach is better.

Staff Photo by Scott Lewis

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By SARAH AVERY, Staff Writer

SANFORD -- Fistfuls of food pellets made Matthew Baldwin popular among the baby goats and sheep in the petting zoo at the N.C. State Fair.

As the critters nudged and licked his hands, the 3-year-old Lee County boy squealed for more pellets. He'd have been happy to spend the whole day feeding the animals, forgoing the rides and fried goodies and midway games: "He loves animals," said his mother, Kellie.

But a 45-minute visit to the petting zoo on an October Sunday may have been all the exposure Matthew needed to pick up the E. coli bacterium, turning the Baldwins' happy afternoon celebrating the state's agricultural heritage into a monthlong medical horror.

A few days after the fair excursion, Matthew doubled over with stomach cramps and bloody diarrhea. He was the first of more than 100 people who apparently got sick from E. coli last month in the days after the State Fair, giving rise to a mystery that has yet to be solved.

Health investigators are still working to pinpoint the source of the bacteria among exhibitors or food vendors who set up on the fairgrounds in Raleigh for the 10-day event.

One of the two petting zoos has emerged as a prime suspect; the bacterium is common in farm animals and spreads to people through exposure to manure.

That makes sense to Kellie Baldwin. "The stroller was covered in poop," she said, noting that the animals milled about freely in the pen with children and their parents.

A genetic strain of the bacterium that infected at least 20 people has been found in soil samples near one of the petting zoos, but health officials said that such evidence is incomplete and may turn out to be misleading. For that reason, they are waiting to finish their investigation before pronouncing a source of the outbreak.

"We are zeroing in on the petting zoo," said Dr. Jeff Engel, state epidemiologist, but he said the investigation hinges on other clues, specifically the actions of thousands of others who went to the fair and came home healthy.

"We want to see if people went to the petting zoo and didn't get [E. coli], or if they had behaviors that protected them," Engel said.

Finding those people to interview is laborious. Between 15 and 20 state health workers, college students and federal officials are calling fairgoers to find three healthy people who match the age of each E. coli victim and ask them where they went during their visit, what they ate, and whether they washed their hands, among other things.

That process may conclude this coming week, Engel said, with a final report naming the source of the outbreak prepared by Christmas, he said.

The petting zoo

Tim and Kellie Baldwin thought they had done everything right on Oct. 17, when they drove up from their home in Sanford to treat Matthew and little Timothy, 19 months, to the fair. Tim Baldwin, a helicopter pilot with the N.C. Highway Patrol, loved taking the boys to the patrol's exhibit of the chopper.

"We went to our exhibit first, but then we went straight to the animals," Tim Baldwin said. "Matthew is infatuated with animals, so we went to every animal exhibit we could find."

At the petting zoo, Timothy stayed in the stroller, but Matthew got out and walked around. The Baldwins loaded up on food pellets three or four times, and some of the goats would beg for food by rearing up and planting their forelegs on people.

"I had that stuff all over the front of my pants," Kellie Baldwin said, referring to the dirt and manure that clung to her from the animals.

As the Baldwins left, they washed their hands using liberal amounts of an anti-bacterial gel available in dispensers near the petting zoo. Kellie Baldwin said the family was fastidious with the gel, and Tim Baldwin even washed the car seats and strollers with bleach when they got home, and steam-cleaned the carpet in the car.

"Everything was just filthy," he said.

Kellie Baldwin said she and the boys returned to the fair that Monday with her mother. The mission that day was to hit the rides, but Matthew also milked a cow, and got manure on himself again.

Everyone rated their annual trip to the fair as top-notch.

Then Tuesday evening, Matthew started complaining of stomach cramps, and by Wednesday, he was throwing up and having diarrhea. Kellie Baldwin picked him up immediately from the baby sitter's and tried to nurse him as best she could with fluids, but he was crying in pain.

"There were some bad boys in my tummy," Matthew said, pointing to the offending area.

The Baldwins figured Matthew had gotten a stomach bug, but as the symptoms lingered, they grew more alarmed. That Saturday, they took him to his pediatrician, who noted that the problems seemed severe. But he suggested the family weather the weekend and said if Matthew didn't get better, they'd perform some tests the next week.

On Monday night, Oct. 25, Matthew became so sick the Baldwins were on the phone numerous times in panicked calls to the doctor. His diarrhea was bloody, he was throwing up blood and he had also developed croup, a respiratory virus that obstructed his breathing.

"He'd be screaming, and then he couldn't breathe to scream," said Tim Baldwin. "I'd take him outside so he could catch his breath."

They checked him into the hospital in Sanford first thing Tuesday morning. The little boy was hooked up to intravenous lines delivering fluids to his dehydrated body, and doctors sent tests off for diagnosis. In the meantime, they decided not to give him antibiotics, which can sometimes backfire in intestinal cases, causing worse illness.

By Wednesday, Matthew seemed a little better, and the family was able to take him home that night. But he stayed frighteningly sick.

Thursday, the lab results explained everything: Matthew was fighting an E. coli infection.

106 cases break out

Across the state, people with similar symptoms and similar experiences were getting the same diagnosis. By Halloween, three cases in Wake County were suspected. Many people, like Matthew, had battled the intestinal symptoms for more than a week, but only got a definitive diagnosis after lab tests came back.

The number of victims grew each day, and almost immediately a petting zoo at the State Fair seemed to be a common thread.

As medical sleuths with the state Division of Public Health intensified their probe, they whittled the disease definition to people who were hit with severe diarrhea between Oct. 15 and Nov. 9. Using that time frame, they ruled out some cases originally suspected of being part of the outbreak. Other cases are still being added. Some cases have been excluded or included on the basis of DNA tests of the bacteria's genetic properties.

So far, 106 cases are believed to be involved in the outbreak, with 50 confirmed as E.coli. More than three-fourths of the victims are children from at least 14 counties, with most victims from Wake. It's the largest outbreak in North Carolina since 2001, when more than 200 people became ill from food exposure in Robeson County.

Armed with the DNA analysis of the bacteria that sickened many of the fair victims, the investigators collected 100 soil samples from every section of the fairgrounds. The strain that infected the largest cluster of people was found in soil near a petting zoo; the area has since been sprayed with disinfectant and is not believed to pose any further risk.

But without corroborating evidence, Engel said, such strong molecular clues do not prove the petting zoo was the ultimate source of the outbreak. People's experiences might lead to another conclusion, he said, which is why the interviews with other fairgoers are taking place.

If the source is found to be the petting zoo, it would fit a pattern.

William D. Marler, a personal injury lawyer in Seattle who specializes in contamination cases, said petting zoos are increasingly being identified as sources of E. coli outbreaks. He said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published suggestions to cut exposure, such as providing hand-washing stations with running water and soap -- an amenity that wasn't offered at the State Fair's petting zoos.

Exhibits that fail to take such measures, Marler said, may carry some legal liability, and four North Carolina families have contacted him.

"I don't think we, as the public and people in positions of authority, have taken this seriously," Marler said. "Maybe five years ago nobody really knew about this, and it was novel. But it's far more than novel at this point. There are dozens of outbreaks that have occurred in petting zoos and fairs.

"We have to get past the thought that we're not going to do anything because fairs are part of Americana. If these were Ferris wheel accidents year in and year out, the public would go crazy."

Thirteen of the North Carolina victims developed a serious complication of E. coli infection called hemolytic-uremic syndrome, in which toxins destroy red blood cells and the kidneys shut down. Four patients remain on dialysis, state health officials said.

After Matthew was diagnosed, the Baldwins were told to watch for any signs that the youngster's kidney function was impaired.

"They told us he could fully recover or he could die, and it would all happen within the next two weeks," Tim Baldwin said -- "and there was nothing they could do for it except monitor it. It was devastating."


On Nov. 1, Matthew had a blood test that showed he was still healthy. He turned 4 the next day, with a family celebration that carried extra emotion. A subsequent kidney test showed continued health, but Matthew still suffers from stomach cramps at least three or four times a day.

The Baldwins are among those who have been in contact with Marler, although Tim Baldwin said he's not sure the family wants to pursue a lawsuit. Marler said he is awaiting the final report from state health investigators to determine if a lawsuit is warranted. The N.C. Attorney General's Office said it has not assessed whether the state has any liability, because no claims have been filed.

For the Baldwins, one thing is certain: They'll never attend the State Fair again.

"It's ruined our experience of the fair," Tim Baldwin said, "for our whole lives."

Staff writer Sarah Avery can be reached at 829-4882 or savery@newsobserver.com.

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LOCAL NEWS

Posted Nov. 19, 2004

County may take over operations of Expo group

By Tara Meissner
Herald Times Reporter

MANITOWOC — Manitowoc County Expo, a non-profit corporation that which operates the Expo Grounds and its events, including the County Fair and Horse-A-Rama, may become an arm of county government.

"People won't notice there is a difference in how's it's being done," Board President Gary Vondrachek said.

The organization, with three employees, scores of volunteers and a 25-member board of directors, can no longer afford to be a private entity because of escalating liability insurance costs and upkeep of the grounds, he said.

County Executive Dan Fischer said it is in the county's best interest to assume control of the organization rather than risk losing the activities presently held at the Expo.

"The Expo asked us to look at it. Quite frankly, many of their members are burnt out," he said.

The County Board of Supervisors has given its approval to assume the activities at the Expo under its Public Works Department. The Expo Board will act on the matter on Nov. 28.

"I am not sure we have a choice," Fischer said.

The county will assume the business with a \$560,000 annual budget, but will not assign any tax dollars to its operation, according to Fischer.

"They have had to do it with no (tax) dollars. They have had to pay for their operations with what they receive in revenue," Fischer said.

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Vondrachek said the board has tried to keep operating in the black by watching its entertainment budget for the fair and relying on extensive volunteer hours.

"The fair makes good money, but the rest of the year... The expenses are just high. I don't know how the county will afford it, that's up to them to do," Vondrachek said.

Fischer said the county is reviewing the operation and make sure everything it does is cost effective.

"We are getting our feet wet in this business," Fischer said.

For roughly the past 30 years, the private entity leased the expo grounds from the county for \$1 a year. The lease agreement was for the calendar year.

"That setup has worked very well for many years," Fischer said. "Things have become a little tighter."

Liability insurance, which in 1992 cost less than \$8,000, has jumped from \$11,000 to \$24,000 in the last four years. Under the umbrella of the county government, liability insurance would drop to about \$5,000, Vondrachek added.

"The problem is in being a private entity it changes your status for insurance," he said.

The Expo Board will not completely go away under the reorganization.

Fischer will appoint a 15-member advisory board, which will report to the Public Works Board and to the County Board of Supervisors, to continue to oversee the county fair, and some other events. The Expo grounds are booked nearly every weekend with events such as flea markets this time of year.

"They will likely ask for our suggestions, instead of us running the whole show," Vondrachek said.

County Public Works Director Jeff Beyer said the county will need to rely on the expertise of the Expo Board in order to ensure success. It is undetermined what will happen to the three employees of the Manitowoc County Expo.

Beyer said the county will contract with a management agency to assume the duties of running the expo.

"It will be up to the management agency if they wish to continue with the present employees," he said.

The Manitowoc County Ice Center will remain a private entity

leasing from the county.

Tara Meissner: (920) 686-2137 or tmeissner@htrnews.com

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State Fair spills more red ink

Back in September the Colorado State Fair projected \$100,000 of black ink, but that projection has now changed to red, and a lot of it. The current numbers show the fair is \$553,000 in the hole. The State Fair Board now plans to ask the state for a \$856,000 loan to get it out of trouble.



Fair officials did cut spending by \$900,000 this year but it wasn't enough to offset a drop in revenue.

Next year the fair will go to an 11-day schedule instead of 16, hoping to save even more money. The Fair also plans to ask the City and County of Pueblo to chip in more money to support the fair.

Updated: 11/12/2004 5:02:29 PM

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