

2005 Conference Highlights

Attendance Remains Strong

A large contingent of representatives from the 107 fairs in Iowa, plus representatives of the 130 plus associate members converged onto the Conference Center for a weekend of learning, sharing and fun. Preliminary registration figures showed just under 1,400 people registered for the Conference.

The opening business meeting of the Association was held on Friday afternoon, as well as a spouse's tour of the Iowa State Capitol followed by shopping at Jordan Creek Mall. I.A.F.E. (International Association of Fairs & Expositions) sponsored a workshop on Friday afternoon, immediately after the opening business meeting. Herb Higgs, Manager of the Panhandle-South Plains Fair in Lubbock Texas, presented "Warm & Fuzzy Doesn't Pay the Bills". Herb's topic proved to be popular with Iowa fair folks, as evidenced by the enthusiastic response from a full room of attendees.

The "Partlow Reception" was held Friday early evening for all members of the Association, which was followed by the Awards Banquet.

The Saturday schedule was packed with seminars, workshops and the ever-popular entertainment showcase. Seminars included. The workshops included "Iowa Fairs & Youth Projects, Current Programs & Future Trends" moderated by Chuck Morris, Director, Iowa 4-H Program; "New Faces in New Places", and "Tossed Salad" moderated by Association Directors; "The Steps to Accessibility at your County Fair - Complying with the ADA" presented by John TenPas, Disability Consultant, Iowa Department of Human Rights; "Parliamentary Procedures for Board Meetings" presented by Joe Yedlik, Great Jones County Fair; "Youth Activities at Your Fair" presented by Tanya Cook, Special Events Director, Iowa State Fair; "2006 Fair Ideas" presented by Arlette Hollister, Superintendent of the Family Theater, Iowa State Fair; and "Sponsors and Community Involvement at your Fair" presented by Tricia Rosendahl, Wright County Fair.

Dan Cain, of Cain Consulting Group, presented three seminars on Saturday that specifically addressed board member responsibilities and board meetings. These two-hour seminars included "Better Board Meetings", "Management vs. Governance", and "Dealing with Problem Board Members". All three seminars received high praise from all attendees.

Saturday evening featured the "Social A'Fair and Auction". This included a large social and supper attended by over 700 Association members. Following the auction, AIF President Richard Smith, his wife Vera, and the Muscatine County Fair Board hosted the "President's Reception in the Presidential Suite.

A second spouse's event was held Saturday afternoon, featuring Beth Fleming, I.S.U. Extension Families Life Specialist. Her presentation, titled "Universal Design in Living", explored ways to make our home and life more comfortable as we all grow and age, by demonstrating unique and new useful tools and household implements to make life easier.

Sunday morning started out with a church service, followed by the popular "Fairman's Breakfast". Following the breakfast, keynote speaker Bob Farmer, a motivational humorist and official spokesman for the *Farmer's Almanac*, entertained the Conference with his presentation of life's experiences relating to the *Farmer's Almanac*. Bob's address, featuring a generous amount of down-to-earth humor, was presented before a near full house.

Conference Business Meetings Held

Business meetings held during the 2005 Conference included the Association's Annual Meeting, the Iowa State Agricultural Society Annual Meeting, O.A.B.A. meeting, Iowa Horse Racing Association meeting, Iowa Foundation for Agriculture Advancement meeting and AIF Associate's meeting.

"Blue Ribbon Fairs" Honored

"Blue Ribbon Fair" awards were presented to 6 fairs, each representing their respective district, at the Awards Banquet, held Friday evening. The 6 Fairs honored included the Woodbury County Fair, Merville; Tama County Fair, Gladbrook; Buchanan County Fair, Independence; Cass County Fair, Atlantic; Ringgold County Fair, Mount Ayr; and Cedar County Fair, Tipton. In order to be recognized as a "Blue Ribbon Fair" a fair must have shown progress in providing service to the 4-H and FFA programs in their community, plus show distinguished service to the community in both fair and non-fair areas.

Awards & Scholarships Presented at 2005 Conference

Honors given out at the Friday evening Awards Banquet include; the "Fairman of the Year" award was presented to Gary Slater, CEO and Manager of the Iowa State Fair. The "Leo Overland Memorial Showman of the Year" award was presented to Staats Custom Awards of Mt. Pleasant Iowa. Two Iowa youth were each presented with \$1000 college scholarships, courtesy of Staats Custom Awards of Mt. Pleasant Iowa, and the Association of Iowa Fairs. They are Jennifer Hansen of Ames and Aaron Erickson of Castana. Congratulations to these AIF members, and Iowa youth, on the honors they were presented with.

Mike Codner Elected 2006 President of the Association Board Officers and Directors Also Elected

Association directors elected to the Board include Dave Hoffman of Merrill in Plymouth County, Alan Brown of Hampton in Franklin County, Shannon Lundgren of Dubuque in Dubuque County, John Straight of Logan in Harrison County, Curtis Sebolt of Cincinnati in Appanoose County, and Richard Smith of West Liberty in Muscatine County. The 2006 officers of the Association Board will find serving Mike Codner of Bristow as President, Erlene Leonard of Colfax serving as 1st Vice President, Don Cain of Colfax serving as 2nd Vice President, and Richard Smith of West Liberty will serve as Past President. Tom & Sue Barnes of Cresco serve as the Association's Executive Director and Executive Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

Iowa State Fair Board Elections Results

Iowa State Fair Board directors were elected during the State Agricultural Society meeting, held during the Conference. Those elected as directors to the Board include Bill Neubrand of Le Mars, Don Greiman of Garner, Dave Huinker of Decorah, C.W. Thomas of Guthrie Center, Randy Brown of Osceola, and Bob Schlutz of Columbus Junction. Officers of the Iowa State Fair Board for 2006 will find Jerry Parkin serving as President, Gary Van Aernam serving as Vice President; and Jeanne Partlow serving as the Treasurer. Gary Slater is the Secretary/Manager of the Iowa State Fair.

Thank to Our Sponsors

Special thanks to several 2005 Conference sponsors. They included Evan's United Shows, Smith's Amusements and Concession, Hendrick's Sound Service and to I.A.F.E. for sponsoring the seminar presented by Herb Higgs on Friday afternoon. Sponsors definitely help a great deal and we certainly appreciate their efforts to help make the Conference the success it is.

Near Record \$19,000 Raised at Fun Auction

The benefit auction, held Saturday evening in conjunction with the Social A'Fair, had 112 items donated from member fairs and associates. Two associate members, J & M Displays of Yarmouth Iowa and Flashing Thunder Fireworks of Mitchell, Iowa donated again this year turnkey fireworks displays, which proved to be very popular. The proceeds from the auction are used for expenses that are incurred by the Association in its efforts to secure legislation that has a positive effect on the fair industry in Iowa. This year the auction raised just over \$19,000.

Special thanks to those members who not only donated auction items, but to those who donated money. Also special thanks to the buyers of the items. The auction is one of the highlights of the Conference, providing a fun time to socialize with all the Association members, while at the same time raise much needed money that is used to benefit all the members of the Association.

I.A.F.E. ZONE 5 MEETING

The I.A.F.E. Zone 5 meeting will be held March 3, 4 and 5 at the Clarion Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, hosted by the Missouri State Fair. All fairs should have gotten the information on this meeting in January. The Zone meeting is always a good time, filled with educational seminars, a great tour and supper and of course lots of socializing. We always learn things at these meetings. And this one looks to be another good time. We hope to see a big contingent of fair folks from Iowa at the Zone meeting.

Legislative Update

Once again fairs are asked to contact their legislators concerning several items of importance to the fair industry in Iowa. First and foremost, the 2006 state funding is again being sought for all fairs that qualify for state funding as outlined in the Iowa Code. Governor Vilsack has included funding for our fairs in his 2006 budget. The amount is the same as in previous. Hopefully our legislators will support the Governor's request for these funds.

The Association will be working on liability issues concerning the fair industry, as well as legislation to protect our members from biased and frivolous lawsuits.

Again this year the Association Board of Directors will be hosting a breakfast for all legislators and their staff on February 14. This will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the Legislative Dining Room of the State Capitol. This event is a great way to showcase the Fairs and promote what they do for their communities to our legislators. All Fairs are invited to attend this event. Contact the AIF office for more information.

Your help is needed, and you are asked to contact your legislators and ask their support on all of the legislation the Association sponsors. Take the time now to respond.

2006 SPRING DISTRICT MEETINGS ***Tentative Dates and Locations (Dates and times could change)***

Please make note of the Spring District meetings. The recording secretary of each District has sent mailings on these meetings to all Fairs in their respective District. This mailing will contain meeting details, such as specific location, date and time, and meeting agenda. It is vital that all fairs attend these meetings. They are very informative, and the Association uses these to keep its members up to date on current issues. In addition, the final payment of your state aid will be distributed at these meetings.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Thursday Evening – March 9, 2006 --- Dickinson County Fairgrounds- Spirit Lake, IA
Social starts at 5:00 p.m. -- Meal at 6:00 p.m., Business meeting to follow
For further information contact Lisa Paysen, District Secretary at 712-664-2967

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon – March 19, 2006 -- Hardin County Fairgrounds – Eldora, IA
Social starts at 12:30 p.m. -- Meal at 1:00 p.m., Business meeting to follow.
For further information contact Deb McVicker, District Secretary at 641-456-2049

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon – March 12, 2006 --- National Cattle Congress Fairgrounds -- Waterloo, Iowa
Social starts at 1:00 p.m. -- Meal at 1:30 p.m., Business meeting to follow.
For further information contact Chris Knapp, District Secretary at 319-352-0639

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Saturday evening – March 25, 2006 --- Villager Inn, Walnut, IA
Social starts at 5:30 p.m. -- Meal at 6:00 p.m., Business meeting to follow.
For further information contact Kathy Bozwell, District Secretary at 712-322-4421

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Sunday afternoon – March 26, 2006 --- Sports Page Grill & Bar, Indianola, IA
Social starts at 1:30 p.m. -- Meal at 1:45 p.m. Business meeting to follow.
For further information contact Erlene Leonard, District Secretary at 515-674-3067

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Saturday evening --- March 18, 2006 --- Mount Pleasant Country Club, Mount Pleasant, Iowa
Social starts at 6:00 p.m. -- Meal at 6:30 p.m., Business meeting to follow.
For further information contact Jim Sloan, District Secretary at 641-652-7858

IOWA YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Sponsored by



Staats Custom Awards, Mt. Pleasant Iowa

and the Association of Iowa Fairs

Staats Custom Awards and the Association of Iowa Fairs are offering two \$1000 scholarships, one to a qualifying FFA member and one to a qualifying 4-H member, who are graduating high school seniors and are planning post-high school education. Applicants are to meet the criteria as outlined below. The attached application is to be completed by applicant.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANT CRITERIA

- At least one of the applicant's immediate family (parents, legal guardians, grandparents) must be a member of their local county fair board, and the fair must be a member in good standing with the Association of Iowa Fairs.
- Applicant must be a member in good standing of a 4-H club or FFA chapter within their community.
- Applicant must have exhibited projects in their county fair, and/or the Iowa State Fair within the last 4 years.
- Applicant must hold a minimum 2.5 grade point average (based on 4.0 system) in high school. Scholarship awardees must also maintain a 2.5 grade point average for the first semester in college and carry at least 12 credit hours.
- The applicant's field of higher education must be tied to agriculture. Some examples include ag-business, veterinary medicine, livestock production and agronomy.
- Applicant must agree to apply the scholarship funds for tuition or fees at a two or four year college, or its equivalent, with preference given to Iowa schools.
- Applicant must have demonstrated support for his/her school, 4-H or FFA organization, and community.
- Applicant must exhibit during the application process a desire to achieve the goals of which the applicant is capable.
- Financial need is not a primary consideration in the selection process.

The application and requested support materials must be submitted on or before August 1st

For more information or to receive a scholarship application,

send letter of interest to:

Association of Iowa Fairs

Scholarship Committee

242 8th Avenue West

Cresco, IA 52136

NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED!

2006 Annual Meeting & Conference

The 2006 Conference and Annual Meeting of the Association of Iowa Fairs will be held on December 15, 16 and 17 at the Holiday Inn Conference Center, on Fleur Drive in Des Moines.

KEEP UP TO DATE – VISIT OUR UPDATED WEB SITE AT WWW.IOWAFAIRS.COM

The Association's web site is updated as often as needed to keep everyone up to date on happenings and changes with the Association members. While we only print our membership directory once a year, changes always take place during throughout year; this is why the web site is important. Plus, as we have time, we change the "Current News" with items that are important to our members.

AIF now has a toll free phone number for member's use. It is 866-547-FAIR.

... FROM THE OFFICE ...

It was another busy and somewhat challenging year in 2005 for our fairs. Fairs reported a positive year, with good crowds and spending was up over last year. The summer heat was an element to deal with, as the weather did keep the fairs guessing, but as usual everyone worked hard and endured to make sure that their fair was a success. Kudos to all members for their effort, especially to the hundreds of volunteers that make the fair industry as strong as it is. And especially would like to extend appreciation to all our associate members for making the fairs, and the fair industry in Iowa, as strong and successful as it is. It could not be done without these great members.

Once again the Conference was a big success. The Saturday workshops proved to be popular and well received. Showcasing was very good, and the fun auction raised a significant amount of money that will be used for legislative efforts. All in all the AIF Board was very pleased with all facets of it. Conference registrations were just under 1400 people, again proving that Conference is very popular with our members. I know everyone learned new things and got great ideas for their own fair or festival. Your AIF Board is dedicated to making the Conference the "#1, must do, must attend" item on our members calendars each year. And evidenced by the participation, I feel that Conference is now very important to all our members. We certainly look forward to the Conference every year. It is indeed a lot of work, but seeing all of our "fair family" is really great.

As usual our March calendar is full of traveling around the state, plus we will be at the Zone 5 I.A.F.E meeting in Kansas City. Sue & I are also planning on attending all of the District meetings as we can. Again this year your AIF Board will be hosting a breakfast for all the legislators and staff at the State Capitol Building. This will take place on February 14. The Board will be meeting with legislators concerning the state funding, and other legislation that is beneficial to the fair industry in Iowa.

Although it doesn't seem like it, spring is just around the corner. By now as all Fairs are finalizing plans for their upcoming season, our farming industry is gearing up for spring fieldwork and Sue is ordering seeds for her many flower gardens we enjoy at home. She puts her "Master Gardener" title to the test, and our home really reflects her talents. And as with all of you, we are preparing for our own county fair in June. While last year Sue & I had to stay close to home in 2005 due to RAGBRAI, we are planning an expanded "Summer Fair Tour 2006", which will see Sue & myself hitting the highways and back roads of Iowa traveling to fairs and festivals. 2006 looks to be another fun, and busy, year. We hope to see you soon.

Tom Barnes, Executive Director