The Association of Iowa Fairs’ 2021 Conference and Annual Meeting was held December 10 through December 12 at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines. Coming on the heels of a year that was very much dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 AIF Conference proved to be very successful and well attended.

Representatives from the 106 fairs in Iowa and of the 123 associate members converged onto the Conference Center for a weekend of learning, sharing and fun. Final attendance tally for the Conference showed 1,105 people registered for the event.

The Conference got underway on Friday morning with the opening business meeting of the Association, followed by the very popular session ‘What’s On Your Mind’.

Workshops that were featured on Friday afternoon included:
- ‘Food Service Guidelines’ - Julie Kraling (Food and Consumer Safety Bureau Iowa Dept. of Inspections & Appeals)
- ‘Alcohol Licensing & Sales’ - Tiffiny Brown & Nate Beyer (Education & Outreach with Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division)
- ‘Conference Newcomer’ - Jim Sloan (Wapello County Fair)

Another session held on Friday afternoon featured an interactive workshop that focused on unique non-fair events & promotions.

AIF District Meetings were held Friday afternoon, hosted by AIF District Directors. Iowa has six fair districts with 16 to 19 fairs in each district. Delegates from each Fair attended their own district meeting where they discussed district business and made plans for future district meetings.

Jenn Dunn (Linn County Fair) and Kurt Palmer (Delaware County Fair) hosted a social and networking event focused on IAFE’s Young Professionals Initiative (YPI). The late Friday afternoon social proved to be popular as a good number of younger fair board members and spouses were in attendance. All enjoyed refreshments and snacks, while networking with others.

The annual Awards Banquet was held Friday evening for members of the Association. Honors presented at the Banquet included the “Fairman of the Year”, the “Leo Overland Memorial Showman of the Year” and recognizing the Fairs that received the AIF’s “Blue Ribbon Fair” award for 2021.

In addition, the 2021 Hall of Fame inductees and recipients of the AIF’s scholarship were also recognized at the Awards Banquet.

Also during the Banquet Tom & Sue Barnes, the AIF’s Executive Director and Executive Secretary/Treasurer respectively, were recognized for their 25 years of leadership of the Association.

The ever-popular live entertainment showcase was held Friday evening after the Awards Banquet.

Saturday opened with a keynote address featuring ‘America’s Everyday Comedian’ C. Willi Myles. C. Willi’s 2022 tour, appropriately titled “Here We Are”, celebrates getting back together after more than a year of pandemic related postponements and cancellations. A veteran performer and an extremely funny guy, his presentation was filled with humorous observations while delivering a positive message on dealing with our post-pandemic lives. His hilarious down-to-earth performance was a big hit with the standing room only crowd.

Saturday educational workshops included:
- ‘Livestock Updates’ - Dr. Jeff Kaisand (State Veterinarian) and Mike Anderson (ISU Extension)
- ‘What is a Service Animal’ - Maggie Donovan with the Puppy Jake Foundation
- ‘Prepare & Practice - Is Your Fair Ready for an Emergency’ - Kurt Palmer (Delaware County Fair)
- ‘Fair Secretary/Manager Workshop’ - Tricia Rosendahl (Wright County Fair)
- ‘Iowa 4-H & FFA Programs’ - Debbie Nistler (ISU Extension State 4-H Program Leader) and Scott Johnson (Executive Director, Iowa FFA)
- ‘Little Miss & Mister Contests’ - Mary Bolton (Mills County Fair)
- ‘Legal Responsibilities of a Fair Board’ - Brittany Lumley (Attorney, LS2 Group)
- ‘Implementing a Successful Sponsor Program’ - Kelsey Morris (Muscatine County Fair)
- ‘The Ins & Outs of a Capital Campaign’ - Carol Symens Lowery and Alan Brown (Franklin County Fair)
- ‘Livestream of Livestock Shows’ - Doug Hawn (Greene County Fair)
- ‘Master Showman Program for Fairs’ - Kerry Scheidegger (Calhoun County Fair)

Another session held on Saturday afternoon focused on what is involved in implementing a Successful Sponsor Program.

Sunday morning started out with a church service dedicated to deceased fair board members and fair volunteers in Iowa, followed by the popular “Fairman’s Breakfast”. After the breakfast, Amanda Radke, a fifth-generation rancher from Mitchell South Dakota, addressed the group focusing on how we can, through our fairs, most effectively respond as producers to protect our freedoms to farm, our freedoms to own livestock, and our freedom of choice at the grocery store.

Business meetings held during the Conference included the Association’s Annual Meeting, the Iowa State Agricultural Society Annual Meeting, Carnival Owners’ meeting, Iowa Horse Racing Association meeting, Iowa Foundation for Agriculture Advancement meeting and AIF Associate members’ meeting.
Leo Overland Memorial Showman of the Year

Ron Lindberg (right)
Rondini Magic & Hypnosis Shows
Appleton Wisconsin

2021 Hall of Fame Inductee
Dave Hoffman
Plymouth County Fair, Le Mars

2021 Hall of Fame Inductee
Gary Willie
Clayton County Fair, National

FAIRMAN OF THE YEAR

Joe Yedlik
Great Jones County Fair, Monticello
(right) was named the AIF’s 2021 ‘Fairman of the Year’.
**IT’S AUCTION TIME!!!**

The annual auction on Saturday evening featured 135 items donated from member fairs and associates. The proceeds from the auction are used for expenses that are incurred by the Association in its efforts that help grow and benefit the fair industry in Iowa.

This year the auction raised a record $34,665.00.

**Thanks to all who supported the auction!**

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**ASSOCIATION BOARD ELECTIONS**

**Steve Voss Elected AIF Board President**

2022 Officers of the Association Board of Directors were elected at the Board’s organizational meeting held on Sunday afternoon following the AIF Conference.

Steve Voss of Sibley was elected as the 2022 President of the Board. Danny Olson of Red Oak will serve as the Board’s 1st Vice President and Jon Baltes of Hampton will be the Board’s 2nd Vice President. The immediate Past President of the Board is Randy Beckman of Sperry.

In addition to Board Officer elections, Tom & Sue Barnes of Cresco were retained by the Board as the AIF’s Executive Director and Executive Secretary/Treasurer.

AIF District Director elections were held at the fall district meetings and ratified at the AIF’s Annual Meeting held during Conference. Elected to the AIF Board for a 2-year term include Kerry Scheidegger of Jolley in Calhoun County (NW District), Ashley Fitzgerald of Boone in Boone County (NC District), Mark Troester of Elkader in Clayton County (NE District), Mary Bolton of Emerson in Mills County (SW District), Sherry James of Perry in Dallas County (SC District) and Dave Shinker of Stanwood in Cedar County (SE District).

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**2022 AIF District Directors**

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<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Voss</td>
<td>NW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerry Scheidegger</td>
<td>NW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Baltes</td>
<td>NC</td>
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<td>Ann Schuster</td>
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<td>Mark Troester</td>
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<td>Ashley Fitzgerald</td>
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<td>Mary Bolton</td>
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<td>Danny Olson</td>
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<td>Roger Iverson</td>
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<td>Sherry James</td>
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<td>Dave Shinker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Randy Beckman</td>
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**Iowa State Fair Board Elections**

Iowa State Fair Board directors were also elected during the State Agricultural Society meeting, held during the Conference.

Those elected as Directors to the Board include Darwin Gaudian of Primghar (NW District), Tennie Carlson of Stratford (NC District), John Harms of Monticello (NE District), CW Thomas of Guthrie Center (SW District), Randy Brown of Osceola (SC District), and Curt Claeyts of Delmar (SE District).

Tennie Carlson was elected as President of the Iowa State Fair Board for 2022. Darwin Gaudian will serve as Vice President and Curt Claeyts will be Board Treasurer. Gary Slater will continue his tenure as the Secretary/Manager of the Iowa State Fair.

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**Mark Your Calendar**

**IAFE Zone 5 Meeting**

March 11 - 13, 2022 – Springfield Missouri

**AIF Conference & Annual Meeting**

December 9 - 11, 2022

Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines
LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST SOCIAL

Wednesday, April 6, 2022 — 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
Iowa State Capitol, East Rotunda, 1st Floor

This Social is a time to meet with our State Legislators to discuss state funding of our Fairs and other legislation that is beneficial to the fair industry in Iowa. All fair folks are invited to attend this special event. Your help is needed as you are asked to contact your legislators and ask their support on all the legislation the Association sponsors.

FROM THE OFFICE …

I hope everyone enjoyed your 2021 AIF Conference. Please share your experiences from Conference and the district meetings with your own fair boards. Take some of the things learned at the Conference and implement them at your fair. 2021 did show how Fairs learned how to adapt due to the pandemic in 2020. New events, new attractions and new ways of doing things were evident.

I am honored for the opportunity to serve as the AIF’s Executive Director. Both Sue and I are proud to be a part of this Association. In our Fair travels it is evident Iowa is a very diverse state. People are hardworking, dedicated and welcoming. The positive words and general support shown to Sue and I are much appreciated.

It is hard to believe our 2022 spring district meetings are coming up rather quickly. And our ‘Fair Tour 2022’ will begin before we know it. Sue and I really enjoy representing the AIF at the various meetings/events and we especially enjoy visiting our Fairs. ‘Thanks’ to all for a great 2021 and best wishes for a better 2022.

See you soon….  
Your AIF Executive Director

Thank-You
Thank-You
Thank-You

To the following for sponsoring snacks, refreshments & coffee breaks.

Action Theater/Impact Pro Wrestling
All American Lumberjack Shows
Campbell’s Concessions - Evans United Shows
G.L. Berg & Associates
Iowa Communities Assurance Pool (ICAP)
Iowa Monster Arm Wrestling - Luehrs’ Ideal Rides
Prairie Event Supply - Scott Amusements
Spectrum Weather & Specialty Insurance
Variety Attractions – Vortex Insurance Agency

Visit www.iowafairs.com

The AIF’s website is updated as often as needed to keep everyone up to date on changes with the AIF’s membership. Membership listings for both Fairs and Associates can be downloaded from the website. This is one more reason why the website is important to all members.

The ‘Members Only’ site is full of information for member fairs. A user ID and password is needed to access this area of the website. Contact the AIF office for instructions on getting an ID & password.

AIF SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Shea Whaley (right) of Eagle Grove was awarded a $1,000 college scholarship, courtesy of the Association of Iowa Fairs. AIF Executive Director Tom Barnes (left) made the presentation at the Awards Banquet.

Scholarship applicants must have an immediate family member on their local county fair board, shall be a member in good standing of either a county 4-H club or FFA chapter and show involvement in other areas of their community. The applicant’s field of higher education must be tied to agriculture, with preference given to applicants attending Iowa schools.

Congratulations to Shea!!

‘Agricultural Advocacy’
Amanda Radke
Sunday morning Guest Speaker

Today’s consumer wants to know more about where their food comes from, but they aren’t getting their information from farmers and ranchers; they are getting their information from the loud voices of animal welfare activists, environmentalist zealots, biased media reporters, healthcare practitioners with plant-based agendas and celebrity influencers.

Amanda Radke is a fifth-generation rancher from Mitchell, S.D., who has dedicated her career to serving as a voice for the nation’s beef producers. Focusing on consumer trends and how society really views food producers, her Sunday morning presentation dove into what these voices are saying about us and how we can, through our fairs, most effectively respond as producers to protect our freedoms to farm, our freedoms to own livestock, and our freedom of choice at the grocery store.
2021 Blue Ribbon Award
Northwest District
BUENA VISTA COUNTY FAIR
Alta

2021 Blue Ribbon Award
North Central District
MITCHELL COUNTY FAIR
Osage

2021 Blue Ribbon Award
Northeast District
DUBUQUE COUNTY FAIR
Dubuque
2021 Blue Ribbon Award
Southwest District
MILLS COUNTY FAIR
Malvern

2021 Blue Ribbon Award
Southeast District
WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR
Washington

2021 Blue Ribbon Award
South Central District
DECATUR COUNTY FAIR
Leon