



Madera District Fair Pioneers a California Fair First: a Long-Term Land Lease Deal Set to Nearly Double the Fair's Annual Revenue

Tough economic times call for creative thinking. And that's exactly what Madera District Fair CEO Scott Sample and his fair's Board were doing six years ago when they came up with an idea for generating revenue from an underused section of their fairgrounds: leasing the 28-acre overflow parking lot for commercial development.

Early in the venture's planning stages, the viability of their idea was confirmed with a master plan study conducted by an outside consulting firm. And in mid-November 2007, all of the fair team's planning, negotiations and perseverance came to fruition when the Department of General Services and the Division of Fairs and Expositions signed lease agreements sealing a 60-year land lease deal between the fair and a commercial developer for The Commons Shopping Center at Madera Fair.

Construction began last November and on July 31st, the first business, Lowe's, a home improvement store, opened its doors. Future tenants of the shopping center, which will be under construction for about another year, include Walgreens, Big 5, Petco, Jamba Juice, a local restaurant and more.

Location, Location, Location

Scott notes that the Madera District Fair is fortunate in its location with commercial property on two sides and its proximity to Highway 99, making the targeted 28 acres

Continued on back page...

Election Year at CFSA: Four Board Seats are Up for Vote

On December 31, there will be four vacant seats on CFSA's board of directors. Expiring terms are those of: Rick Pickering, representing Fair Classes 3 - 7; Rebecca Desmond, director-at-large representing Fair Classes 1 and 2 (this seat rotates between Fair Classes 1 and 2, and 3 - 7. A representative from Fair Classes 3 - 7 will serve in the upcoming term); Lonny Wunder, representing Fair Classes 1 - 2 (this seat is currently vacant; Lonny resigned from the board when he resigned as CEO of the Yolo County Fair); and Ed Scofield, representing Fair Classes 3 - 7, who will be retiring from the Nevada County Fair, making this a mid-term vacancy.

A notice of Appointment of Fair Electors was mailed to all CFSA-member fairs on August 1, with fair resolutions appointing the Electors due back to CFSA by October 1.

Rick Pickering, CFSA Board Chair, will form a Nominating Committee by October 7 and candidates (from the pool of Electors) for the open seats will be selected. CFSA will mail ballots to all members by October 10, with ballots due back to CFSA by October 24. Ballots will be counted and new directors announced in the November *fyi* newsletter.

For information about the election process please contact Donna Horner at 916/921-2213. If you're interested in running, please contact Rick Pickering at 925/426-7600.

California's Fairgrounds Step Up to Help Wildfire Threatened Communities

In addition to providing communities with fun and games, California's fairgrounds have a serious side — a side put to good use as firecamps, evacuation sites and more during the recent wildfires.

Involved fairgrounds include the San Diego County Fair, Napa Valley Expo, Nevada County Fair, Mariposa County Fair, Mendocino County Fair, Shasta District Fair, Redwood Empire Fair, Trinity County Fair, Inter-Mountain Fair of Shasta County, the Silver Dollar Fair, Santa Barbara Fair and Expo, Santa Cruz County Fair, and the Trinity County Fair. Here are a few of their stories:

At the Earl Warren Showgrounds, home of the Santa Barbara Fair and Expo, CEO Scott Grieve reports that the opportunity to help began July 2, one day after the Gap Fire began burning outside of Goleta and Santa Barbara, and on the first day of the 89th Annual Santa Barbara National Horse Show (with 297 show horses already stabled on the grounds).

From July 2 - July 9, while the two-week horse show went on as planned, fire-fighting personnel set up an Incident Command Post **Continued in center column on back page...**

"It's not thinking OUT of the box, it's about thinking WITHOUT the box."
~ Robert Clancy,
Spiral Design



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Let's hear from you!
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CFSA's 2007 Annual Report
If you'd like a copy or additional copies of CFSA's '07 Annual Report, "Above and Beyond," please contact Melissa Thurber, mthurber@cfssa.org or 916/263-6163.

"If all the cars in the United States were placed end to end, it would probably be Labor Day Weekend."
~ Doug Larson

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**WFA's Annual
Open House is
Thursday, August 21**

It's hot . . . it's summer . . . and that means it's time for Western Fairs Association's (WFA's) Open House at the California State Fair. All WFA fair industry friends and guests are invited to join WFA at the Cal Expo Satellite Wagering Turf Club, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., for hors d'oeuvres, a light dinner and a chance to chat with colleagues.

Remember to bring your WFA credential for parking and State Fair admission.

Questions? Give WFA a call at 916/927-3100.

Madera District Fair, continued

highly desirable for commercial development. Once completed, the open-air shopping center will feature 330,000 square feet of retail space with sidewalks that conveniently link to the fairgrounds.

As for this year's fair, September 4 - 7, Scott said construction shouldn't interfere with any fair activities. Because the fairground now shares the shopping center's parking lot, parking for the fair will be free. "We'll do our very best to accommodate fairgoers," he emphasized.

Dollars and Sense

The Madera District Fair is the first fair in California to accomplish a public-private partnership of this magnitude. The lease will bring the fair \$925,000 annually for the first five years — almost doubling the fair's annual revenue — with a 10 percent raise every five years thereafter. This is money already earmarked for much-needed infrastructure, building and landscaping renovations to the aging facility that dates back to 1938. A loan based on the lease agreement has already been secured allowing fairground upgrades to begin immediately on exhibit buildings, bathrooms and fair offices.

Find Out How They Did It

Looking back at the process, it's Scott's hope that what his fair has accomplished can serve as a template for other fairs. For more information, you can give Scott Sample a call *after* his annual fair is over at 559/674-8511.

Wildfires, continued from front page

and the Gap Fire Logistics and Support Team Headquarters, providing housing, meals and logistical support for hundreds of firefighters. In addition, during these first few days of the fire, the Showgrounds, with help from the all-volunteer Santa Barbara Equine Assistance and Evacuation Team, took in 91 additional horses, two donkeys and even a pot-bellied pig belonging to fire evacuees. Care and boarding for the animals was provided by the fair and volunteers at no charge to the animals' owners.

The Gap Fire burned 9,800 acres and forced the evacuation of 450 homes.

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For more than a month, the Santa Cruz County Fair provided a home base for firefighters and support agencies responding to a trio of wildfires, two of which had a major impact on the fair's facilities. The fairground even provided water for the firefighting vehicles.

On May 22, in response to the Summit Fire, three agencies: Cal Fire, the Office of Emergency Services and the Salvation Army moved onto the fairgrounds. In addition, the Red Cross set up a shelter for evacuated residents. Community volunteers, a valuable resource all their own, helped transport and care for evacuated horses and cattle living in the fair's horse show area.

Fire number two, the Martin Fire, burned in the hills above Santa Cruz, a considerable distance from the fair. Even so, horses, llamas, goats, pigs and sheep affected by the fire were brought to safety on the fairgrounds.

The fairgrounds also served as a major staging area during the Trabling Fire, which closed Highway 1 and impacted

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Wildfires, continued

cattle and horse ranches in the area. Cal Fire used the fairgrounds for a vehicle fueling center, in addition to several fair buildings for administration. Tents, to house staff, firefighters and inmate work crews were brought in, along with showers, a kitchen, wash stations and restrooms.

During the three fires, the fair stabled 500 evacuated animals in-between hosting several scheduled horse shows. John Scurfield, the fair's deputy manager, noted that all of the fairground's interim events went on as planned, however, no new events could be added.

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Hayfork's Trinity County Fair was home to a firecamp and (at its peak) 2,000 firefighters and National Guard responding to dozens of wildfires nearby.

Although it's never the right time for wildfires, the timing of these fires was doubly worrisome in that fairtime was quickly approaching. This presented fair management with a tough decision: whether or not to cancel the annual fair. As the fires continued to burn, management decided that cancelling the fair, slated to begin August 22, would be the prudent thing to do. (Because of the location of the Junior Livestock Show and Sale on the fairgrounds, it will go on as scheduled.)

This is the first Trinity County Fair cancellation since World War II, noted the fair's business assistant, Pam Swanson.

Pam added that as of August 8th, the Lime Complex fires were 95 percent contained with a projected containment date targeted for the week of August 11.