

# ARAPAHOE COUNTY FAIR



# 2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

## Today's Overview:

- 1.) Staff will present key operational changes to the 2026 Fair
- 2.) Request: Board approval to implement staff recommended changes



# 2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

## Planning Process:

- ❖ August 14<sup>th</sup> tabletop to begin strategizing and researching options
  - Participants included: Communications, CSU Extension, Open Spaces
    - Gini Pingnot, Matt Bixenman, Lexy Kingsbaker, Jeff Hester, Dan Payson, Brenda Lucero, Michelle Halstead, Chris Henning, Jordan Ames, Lizzie Mayer, Dina Baker, Sara Overby, Lindsey Friend, Jessica Hites, Meagan Perks
- ❖ 4 workgroups met over 6 weeks (mid-August to early October) to explore pros/cons of various approaches
- ❖ October 1st reconvening of above participants to share findings and identify consensus recommendations



# 2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

## Staff Recommendations:

- 1.) Gate Model & Fair Pricing: Sustain the historic pay one price model and increase gate entry ticket to \$30 per person (\$34 with Fees.
- 2.) Fair Hours: Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)
- 3.) Pours on the Plains: Eliminating Pours on the Plains & creating new entertainment activation

# 2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

**For each recommendation:**

- ❖ Background Slide(s)
- ❖ Options Discussed
  - Pros & Cons/Considerations



## **GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING**



# BACKGROUND: FAIR BY NUMBERS

## Financial Summary

| Year        | Revenue     | Expense     | Loss         | Cost Recovery |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2022        | \$800,234   | \$876,020   | \$ (75,876)  | 91.35%        |
| 2023        | \$929,138   | \$956,673   | \$ (27,535)  | 97.12%        |
| 2024        | \$947,179   | \$999,321   | \$ (52,143)  | 94.78%        |
| 2025 (YTD)  | \$981,142*  | \$1,064,130 | \$ (82,988)  | 92.20%        |
| Est. 2026** | \$1,010,576 | \$1,133,298 | \$ (122,722) | 89.17%        |

## Fair Attendance

|          | 2022 Fair | 2023 Fair | 2024 Fair | 2025 Fair | 24' vs 25' Comparison |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Thursday | 1,600     | 2,438     | 2,181     | 2,262     | 4%                    |
| Friday   | 6,844     | 5,746     | 6,574     | 6,390     | -3%                   |
| Saturday | 11,331    | 10,802    | 9,654     | 10,830    | 11%                   |
| Sunday   | 7,369     | 6,662     | 6,691     | 6,947     | 4%                    |
| Total    | 27,144    | 25,648    | 25,100    | 26,429    | 5%                    |

\*Excludes one-time transfer and grant monies of \$118,472

\*\* Estimate based on 3% revenue growth factor and 6.5% expense growth factor (matching 2024 to 2025)

# BACKGROUND: FAIR BY NUMBERS

## Ticket Price History

|      | Ticket | Saffire<br>Ticket Fees | CC Processing | Fee Total | Total Ticket Price |
|------|--------|------------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 2022 | \$20   | \$2                    | \$1           | \$3       | \$23               |
| 2023 | \$25   | \$2                    | \$1           | \$3       | \$28               |
| 2024 | \$25   | \$2                    | \$1           | \$3       | \$28               |
| 2025 | \$25   | \$2                    | \$1           | \$3       | \$28               |

\* Note: Proposed 2026 increase in ticket price to \$30 will result in a \$4 fee (\$3 Saffire/ticket fee + \$1 CC processing) fee.

## Saffire Ticket Fees

| Online/Print at Home<br>Tickets |        | Purchased at Gate<br>Tickets |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|
| TICKET PRICE                    | FEE    | TICKET PRICE                 | FEE    |
| \$0-\$5.00                      | \$0.75 | ALL                          | \$0.25 |
| \$5.01 - \$10.00                | \$1.00 |                              |        |
| \$10.01 - \$15.00               | \$1.50 |                              |        |
| \$15.01 - \$25.00               | \$2.00 |                              |        |
| \$25.01 - \$40.00               | \$3.00 |                              |        |
| \$40.00 - \$50.00               | \$4.00 |                              |        |
| \$50.01 & up                    | \$5.00 |                              |        |



## GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING

❖ Staff explored the pros and cons of **two** options:

- 1.) Sustain the historic pay one price model & increase gate entry ticket to \$30 per person.
- 2.) Separate gate entry ticket: recommended to be no more than \$10 by carnival vendor (current share is \$12.50 per ticket) & Carnival Wristband fee (upwards of \$40/person).



# FAIR TICKET PRICING

## #1: One Ticket Price - \$30

| Ticket Price Options                 | Additional Rev | Rounded Loss |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| \$25 + Processing & Credit Card Fees | -              | \$ (83,000)* |
| \$26 + Processing & Credit Card Fees | \$12,627       | \$(70,373)   |
| \$27 + Processing & Credit Card Fees | \$25,254       | \$(57,746)   |
| \$28 + Processing & Credit Card Fees | \$37,881       | \$(45,119)   |
| \$29 + Processing & Credit Card Fees | \$50,508       | \$(32,492)   |
| \$30 + Processing & Credit Card Fees | \$63,135       | \$(19,865)   |

\*\$83,000 is the rounded loss from the County's 2025 fair (see slide 7)

### Take Home:

- Every \$1 increase will provide \$.50 per ticket to the county
- $(\$0.50 \times 25,254^* = \$12,627)$  additional revenue to cover the deficit)

\*The county comps roughly 500 tickets/year through redeemed sponsorships & Boots Not Suits.



# GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING

## #1: One Ticket Price - \$30

### Pros

- Unique (only Fair in Colorado that has free carnival rides with entry ticket!)
- Amazing value - \$40 Carnival Wristband Value/ Rodeo/ Concert / Heritage Hall/ Fireworks and More!
- Greater financial transparency
  - County calculates ticket revenue split
  - Carnival calculates food/game revenue split

### Cons

- Increasing ticket price.
- Budget cuts still necessary - \$30/ticket only covers 75% of 2025 shortfall
- Non-riding carnival fairgoers still pay same price

# GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING

## #2: Gate Ticket \$10 and Carnival Ticket \$40 (Unlimited Rides) Example

|                                                                         |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 🔗 \$10 ticket + \$3 Processing fees + Separate Carnival Wristband Share |                     |
| <b>Revenue</b>                                                          |                     |
| Fair Tickets Redeemed                                                   | 25,000              |
| Fair Tickets Sold                                                       | 26,000              |
| Price per entry ticket                                                  | \$13                |
| <b>Total Proceeds from Tickets</b>                                      | <b>\$338,000.00</b> |
| Total Ride Wristbands Purchased - 35% of redeemed                       | 6,250               |
| Price of Wristband                                                      | \$40                |
|                                                                         | \$250,000           |
| <b>30% Share of Ride Wristbands</b>                                     | <b>\$75,000</b>     |
| <b>Total Carnival/Gate Revenue Estimate</b>                             | <b>\$413,000</b>    |
| <b>Other Revenue (Sponsorship, Food &amp; Bev, Etc)</b>                 | <b>260,000</b>      |
| <b>Gen Fund Transfer/ Employee Ticket 627 in '25</b>                    | <b>6,270</b>        |
| <b>Total Revenue Estimate</b>                                           | <b>679,270</b>      |
| <b>Expenses</b>                                                         |                     |
| 2026 Estimated Expenses (3% over 2025 actual)                           | 720,470             |
| Processing Fees                                                         | 20,000              |
| <b>Total Estimated Fair Expenses</b>                                    | <b>740,470</b>      |
| <b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>                                                | <b>(61,200)</b>     |

### Pros

- Reduce Carnival payment from budget. Est \$700,000 budget vs \$1,000,000 budget
- All a carte options
  - \$40 Unlimited Ride Wristband and Pay per ride options

### Cons

- If carnival experience is important, county to pay for up to \$50 (carnival wristband + gate fee) for employee, comp tickets, and Boots not Suits ticket.
- Any gate ticket higher than \$10 could deter fairgoers due to overall higher expense.
- More complicated communication to fairgoers.
- Learning curve for fair patrons, transition year.
- Projected \$61,200 shortfall



## **FAIR DAYS/HOURS**



# BACKGROUND: FAIR DAYS/HOURS

**Fair Hours History**

|          | 2023<br>Hours | 2024<br>Hours | 2025<br>Hours |
|----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Thursday | 4pm-midnight  | 4pm-midnight  | 4pm-midnight  |
| Friday   | 4pm-midnight  | 11am-midnight | 11am-midnight |
| Saturday | 11am-midnight | 11am-midnight | 11am-midnight |
| Sunday   | 11am-10:30    | 11am-10:30    | 11am-10:30    |



## FAIR DAYS/HOURS

❖ Staff explored the pros and cons of **two** options:

- 1.) Removing or Adding Days to Fair
- 2.) Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)



# FAIR DAYS/HOURS

## #1 Removing or Adding Days to Fair

### ❖ Considerations discussed on the length of Fair:

- Spreading out weather risk
- Potential increase in attendance/revenue
- Ability to move Boots not Suits
- Additional operational expenses
  - Entertainment, Staffing, Security, Equipment Rental etc.
- Wear and tear on County staff



## FAIR HOURS/DAYS

### #2 Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)

#### Pros

- Reduced programming gaps
- Less wear and tear on staff (15-20% reduction in total fair hours)
- Saved expenses on:
  - Contracted Staff (roughly \$8,000 in savings)
  - County Staff (roughly \$12,000 in savings)
- Help avoid high temps during the heat of the day (average temps 86.5 to 88 degrees)

|          | 2025 Hours    | 2026 Hours   |
|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Thursday | 4pm-midnight  | 4pm-midnight |
| Friday   | 11am-midnight | 2pm-midnight |
| Saturday | 11am-midnight | 2pm-midnight |
| Sunday   | 11am-10:30    | 2pm-midnight |



## FAIR HOURS/DAYS

### #2 Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)

#### Tickets Sold between 11am-2pm

|              | 2023 Fair    | 2024 Fair    | 2025 Fair    |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|              | 11am-2pm     | 11am-2pm     | 11am-2pm     |
| Thursday     | N/A          | N/A          | N/A          |
| Friday       | N/A          | 1,157        | 949          |
| Saturday     | 2,067        | 1,987        | 2,037        |
| Sunday       | 1,808        | 1,806        | 1,698        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>3,875</b> | <b>4,950</b> | <b>4,684</b> |

#### Cons

- Potential loss of revenue from tickets sales from 11-2 pm on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (4,684 x \$25 = \$115,000 Worst Case Scenario)

## **POURS ON THE PLAINS**





# BACKGROUND: POURS ON THE PLAINS

Total cost to attendee: \$50

Pours on the Plains Financial Summary

|      | Revenue   | Expenses  | Net Loss  |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2023 | 9,763.00  | 11,162.92 | -1,399.92 |
| 2024 | 12,204.00 | 13,989.46 | -1,785.46 |
| 2025 | 8,256.00  | 11,468.66 | -3,212.66 |

Pours on the Plains – Ticket Sales

|      | Redeemed | Sold/Comp | DD Tickets |
|------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 2021 | 383      | 569       | 20         |
| 2022 | 359      | 541       | 16         |
| 2023 | 345      | 498       | 1          |
| 2024 | 246      | 402       | 4          |
| 2025 | 242      | 386       | 5          |

\*Since the pandemic, Colorado has lost **140 craft breweries**, including **41 closures in 2024** and **35 in 2023**. Overall, beer sales in the state declined by **3.2% in 2024**, which was worse than the national average of **-2%** for craft beer.



## POURS ON THE PLAINS

❖ Staff explored the pros and cons of **two** options:

- 1.) Eliminating and creating indoor seating cooling space
- 2.) Eliminating and creating new entertainment activation



# POURS ON THE PLAINS

## #1 Eliminating and creating indoor seating cooling space

### Pros

- Option to save entertainment activation budget
- Creates indoor space to cool down
- No operational oversight
- Ride Share logistics and cost decrease
- No late flip of facility

### Cons

- Disappoint beer fans\*
- Dead space

\* Staff looking at expanding beer options at existing beer tents



# POURS ON THE PLAINS

## #2 Eliminating and creating entertainment activation

- ❖ Replace with something like an indoor, all ages, roller skating event

### Pros

- Creates indoor space to cool down
- Small operational oversight
- No late flip of facility
- Space made available to all fairgoers
- Eliminate comp tickets

### Cons

- New concept and lack of staff familiarity
- Waiver process
- Depending on pricing model a budget impact may occur

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## OTHER CHANGES IN STORE FOR 2026 FAIR

### Other Operational Updates:

- 1.) Credit Card Processor: update to increase security and payment options. (Apple/Google Pay)
- 2.) 120/150/250 Celebration: Efforts and Ideas



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

