



Board Summary Report

File #: 24-602

Agenda Date: 10/28/2024

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Gini Pingnot, Director, Open Spaces

Prepared By:

Matt Bixenman, Fairgrounds Site Manager, Open Spaces

Presenter: Matt Bixenman, Fairgrounds Site Manager, Open Spaces

Subject:

1:15 PM *2024 Fair Debrief

Purpose and Request:

County staff will review and summarize the 2024 Arapahoe County Fair held on July 25-July 28, 2024.

Background and Discussion: The Arapahoe County Fair is an opportunity to showcase the Fairgrounds Event Center and Park, exhibit 4-H youth projects, sponsor a family-oriented event and to provide a gathering place for County residents.

The 2024 Fair had the following goals:

- Offer exceptional customer service and value to the community through a quality family-oriented event that are safe, diverse, educational, and fun;
- Be fiscally and operationally sustainable;
- Provide a safe and quality visitor experience;
- Support 4-H completion events and public competitions;

- Showcase the County's diverse history, cultural heritage, and current services.

Attendance/Survey/Entertainment: Fair attendance for the 2024 Fair was 25,100. Comparing to 2022 this year's fair was down around 7.5% (table attached).

A survey is conducted annually after the Fair. This year had some great feedback and a few items to try to improve on. Most fairgoers are happy with their experience and are likely to return. High pricing of food seems to be a similar theme in the negative experiences.

Entertainment was in full force this year at the Fair. New experiences included Flippen Trampoline, Top Hogs, Toddler Town, and new main stage acts. Rodeos, fireworks, mutton bustin, 4h animals and exhibits, and the carnival continued as staples to the Arapahoe County Fair.

Communication Services/Sponsors: The Communication Services Team is responsible for the marketing, advertising and public relations activities associated with the Arapahoe County Fair. The Communications Team strives to build awareness of the Arapahoe County Fair, to increase attendance and to help ensure the Fair meets its cost recovery goals.

The Communication Services team manages and coordinates:

- Marketing and advertising
- Public sector event engagement and sponsorship
- Event public relations and media relations
- Crisis Communications
- Develop the post event marketing and advertising summary report
- Boots Not Suits Dinner (in coordination with the events team in Open Spaces)
- Printing all materials and working with Open Spaces staff to produce event signage

Fair Marketing and Advertising Strategy and Highlights:

- News releases
- Calendar listings
- Social Media Posts
- Digital ads

- Banners around town (main street Littleton)
- Radio
- Live and taped TV appearances highlighting the Fair, 4-H and Craft Brew Fest.

The sponsorship program was very successful for the 2024 Fair. New business continues to gravitate towards the Fair and become valued partners. There are six sponsors with multi-year agreements. The fair secured \$120,000 in cash, with an additional \$30,000 in-kind value.

4H, Open Class and Livestock Sale: The 4-H Home Economics and General entries totaled 205 exhibits. Public Competitions entries came in at 356 entries. The 4-H livestock and small animal entries were 300. The 2024 Livestock Sale totaled \$343,925. (A 5% increase over 2023 sale totals.)

Volunteer Connections: The County minimizes Fair expenses through the support of volunteers. Volunteer coordination is handles through the Cody O'Brien in the BOCC office. Cody recruits and manages the general Fair volunteers. Those who volunteer specifically for 4-H and Open Class Programming are given work assignments and supervised by CSU Extension staff. For the 2024 Fair the number of volunteer hours for the event totaled 598 hours through the BOCC office. 4H/Public Competitions/Livestock Sale volunteer hours totaled 4,919.

Fair Kick Off Dinner: The 2024 Boots not Suits Dinner was held on the evening of Thursday, July 25th and was planned/implemented by Communication Services. The event had 375 attendees. 95 of those were sold tickets with the rest being an invitational ticket.

Pours on the Plains (Craft Brew Event): The 2024 Pours on the Plains was held on the evening of Friday, July 26th and was planned/implemented by Fairgrounds Events Team. The event had 238 paid tickets, 49 comp tickets redeemed, and 4 designated driver tickets sold.

Revenue & Expenses: The Fair's core revenue is generated from gate admission, parking fees, liquor sales, sponsorship dollars and carnival revenues. The gate admission of \$25 was split 50 percent to the County and 50 percent to the carnival provider. A gate fee was charged to all fairgoers over 36" tall. The gate / wristband fee included both general admission and a carnival rides. This is the 2nd year for a \$25 dollar ticket. The 2023 Fair had a presale of \$20 during the month of June and then moved to \$25. 2022 Fair was a flat \$20 ticket.

Fairgrounds staff under the direction of the Fair Executive Team worked with numerous new entertainment and equipment vendors for best value towards the 2024 Fair. As of September 30th, the County's financial system is showing year to date of approximately \$944,666 in revenue and \$972,410 in expenditures for the event. The year-to-date actuals have not been completely finalized for the event and are subject to change as there are

pending invoices.

Employee Tickets: The 2024 Fair had 543 county employees redeem tickets. There is a \$1575 shortage in the fair budget based on the number of redemptions and the \$25 ticket price. Staff will work to increase this amount for the 2025 budget and amend if there is a change to the ticket price structure.

2025 Fair Dates: Fair staff has determined the 2025 dates for the Arapahoe County Fair as July 24-27. Efforts are starting now to outline the plan for the 2025 County Fair.

Fiscal Impact: The numbers included in this document and the associated presentation will reflect only the revenues and expenditures related to the Fair recorded within the Fair Fund. They exclude any transfers from the General Fund, Fairgrounds venue rental revenues and reimbursements from the General Fund for employee tickets.

Alternatives: N/A

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- Be fiscally sustainable
- Provide essential and mandated service
- Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: N/A

Concurrence: The Arapahoe County Fair Planning Committee supported the development of the 4-H statistics.