

January 25, 2017

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS NEXT STEPS

The five Action Plans from our Strategic Planning Meeting on January 11, 2017 identified some excellent recommendations that, if executed, can help financially sustain the operations and position the Fair and the Fairgrounds as a bigger asset to Tuolumne County. It's recommended that the Board adopt the Plans as presented with the changes that were identified during the meeting, a copy of which is attached.

While there is a great deal of work associated with the Plans' execution, the Board should consider beginning the process of implementing a portion of the Action Plans. Identified below are the Plan recommendations as presented by the Committees which the Board should consider implementing in the near future. Recommendations are grouped according to the current Board's Committee Structure. Also included are recommendations for the Friends of the Fairgrounds.

Should the Board agree to move forward as recommended, it's suggested that the Board at next month's Committee meetings breakdown the recommendations into a series of tasks, assignments and timelines. This information would be presented by each of the Board Committees at the February Board Meeting and monthly progress reports to follow.

Finance Committee

1. Determine net gain or loss on existing events based upon evaluation of the Fair Grounds costs associated with the event and the revenues achieved. This analysis will tell us which events are worth continuing and which may need rate increases or avoidance.
2. Evaluate current rental rates based upon Step 1, above, and then compare those with other Fair Ground rates and other Sonora Area venues which compete with the Fair Grounds for events. They are the Opera Hall, Elks Lodge, Black Oak Casino, Mountain Springs, Best Western, the Posse Grounds, and others? Increase rates as necessary.

Exhibits and Entertainment

1. Sponsors Luncheon: Invite past, present and potential sponsors to a luncheon at the fairground. The messaging at this luncheon would be:

Transparency-State of the Fair
Interact with Sponsors-What helps their decisions to sponsor?
What keeps them from wanting to sponsor?

The lunch would be put on as a partnership with the Fair and 4-H/FFA. 4-Hers/FFA could be on hand to serve the lunch along with Sonora High Culinary Arts Class. Additionally, maybe some time could be given to youth exhibitors to tell the sponsors what the Fairground (and Fair) means to them.

The sponsors should be shown a prioritized list of all the repairs along with costs for each that are currently needed at the Fairground. So if a sponsor wanted to give enough to take care of a certain issue, they would know how much is needed and then they can expect that fix to happen (show accountability). This could also highlight the fixes that need to be done and perhaps entice a local company to make an in-kind repair.

2. Improve the marketing/PR/outreach/social media of the fair.

Building and Grounds

1. Complete the Five Year Plan that includes a description of each of the projects along with a cost estimate for the work.
2. Recruit a chief fundraiser/project manager from the community. A point person is essential to keep projects moving forward.
3. Mix projects together to achieve success. Match unappealing projects with appealing ones.
4. Identify all philanthropic organizations (Foundations, etc.) in the community.
5. Identify supporters for certain projects. For example, bridal shops for a gazebo project.
6. Identify useful mailing databases.
7. Make sure that Friends of the Fairgrounds has “buy-in” and allow them to choose only projects they are capable of succeeding.
8. Make sure that the capital projects have wide scope. Fundraising should be for the entirety of the fairgrounds, not just the fair itself.
9. New capital projects should begin with a well-publicized kickoff event to maximize fundraising efforts. After completing items 1-8, develop an Action Plan for #9.
10. Consider a community clean up day – partnering with local groups

Policy and Procedures

1. Contact existing users of the facilities to see what we can do better and assure them that we will be around for their future events.

2. Create a system where all users are strongly encouraged to fill out a critique in order to give us the feedback needed for continuous improvement.
3. Determine how many volunteers we need and for what. This will help steer what kind of people would be the best candidates. Do we need people who can pound nails or create spread sheets
4. Identify projects and untapped groups who might be useful for those specific projects
5. Identify a volunteer coordinator.
6. Establish/clarify who is responsible for training and supervising volunteers

Friends of the Fairgrounds

1. Reinvent the Friends of the Fairgrounds.
2. Be more responsive to people who apply e.g. contact them and make them feel welcome to the group
3. Make it more attractive for potential members
4. Learn social media
5. Promote events that people want to participate in
6. Give members something for their money
7. Look at changing meeting times

While these are our recommendations, each Board Committee will need to judge if it's capable of executing the recommendations and under what timeframes. It's also recommended that the Board reach out to those who made the recommendations and see if they're willing to work with your Committees in their execution.

The 5 Action Plans, when executed, will play a large part in the success of the Fairgrounds and the Fair. I would encourage you to spend time at each Board Meeting reviewing your progress. Once a CEO is hired, that person can assist with keeping the Board's efforts on track and helping with executing the remainder of the Plan.