



Lake County Fairgrounds
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July 21, 2020

Honorable Members of the Ways & Means subcommittee on General Government
Via email: jwmgg.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

On behalf of the Lake County Fair Board, and myself I am writing this letter to request that you reconsider the proposed \$1 million dollar cut for county fairgrounds.

1. In many counties, fairs are one of the only entities in Oregon still providing educational opportunities for local youth. The return on investment for just \$1 million in state funding is extraordinarily high, particularly in Oregon's rural counties.
2. Fair funding supports local fairground programs year-round, not just during "fair week." The Lake County Fairgrounds central lawn is utilized as a practice area for youth T-Ball, Soccer, Hackysacking and pitching practice, children's birthday parties, family reunions, outdoor lunches and the list goes on. The arena area is utilized on a daily basis by youth for practicing and clinics providing education and skill enhancement. The barn areas are utilized regularly by youth groups for clinics and practices for livestock handling, showmanship and animal education. The exhibit buildings are used by the community for numerous functions, i.e., meetings, trainings, holiday crafts fairs, birthday parties, weddings, quincenerea, OHA Banquet, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Banquet, two annual gun show and memorials. The lawn, arena and grandstands are utilized for July 4th Family Day BBQ and fireworks, the ATV track is constantly used by the youth and community. Our fairground is so much more than just our Annual Fair & RoundUp, although that is a huge event that brings the entire County together, and makes us a little stronger each year.
3. If fair funding is cut today, not only will current programs be eliminated, but the 2021 fair season is also jeopardized, particularly for smaller and rural counties. We work are to be good financial stewards of the small budget we are entrusted with and want to be able to continue to be there for the community in a myriad of fashions. For a small fairground like we are, situation in a disadvantaged county, if we don't have financial consistency, we won't be able to continue the necessary preparations, repairs, maintenance, and all the other operating expense required on a daily basis or to have an annual fair.

Thank you for your time. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Ronne Lindsay
Manager, Lake Co Fairgrounds

To the Great State of Oregon Leaders,

I am requesting that the Oregon fairs “recommended” budget cuts of up to \$1 million from the lottery allocation not happen!

As a local business owner, parent and Jackson County Fair Board member I have a long and varied history with Oregon County Fairs. I know that the Jackson Expo and Fairgrounds is used for many youth and community events over an entire year, not just for “fair week”. The fairgrounds is host to multiple events each week that provide support to local businesses and county governments. This support comes in the form of hotel/motel tax, visits to restaurants and other shopping/recreational activities.

The majority of the funding for the Jackson County Expo is through sponsorships from local businesses and private parties that believe that supporting youth and community events at the Expo makes for a stronger community and provides opportunities that would otherwise not be available. The loss of the funding provided by the State of Oregon at this time would be the final straw that caused our fairgrounds to go into a state of disrepair and disuse. With the economic impact on the COVID-19 restrictions to local businesses, they are unable to provide the sponsorships that are relied upon for operations. The Expo needs their allocation of lottery funds.

Without the ability to keep the Jackson County Expo open and operational, we lose the disaster prepared site in the case of wild fire or other natural disasters. Over the last several years the Jackson County Expo has opened its doors and gates to displaced livestock and pets, wildlands firefighters, and semi’s that were stranded due to weather.

Please reconsider the budget allocations and allow our County Fairs (fairgrounds) to receive funding and stay viable.

Thank you for your time,

Carolyn

Carolyn M. Ryder, CPA, CGMA
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I heard from our local Jackson County fair board members that the Oregon legislature may be cutting funding for our fairgrounds. I am shocked that you would consider cutting funding for such a vital part of our local community, especially during this pandemic crisis. I have lived in the Rogue Valley for over 20 years; during that time, I have been very impressed with the number of events that the Jackson County fair has sponsored. Our local businesses always as much as possible with donations and sponsorship so that the fairgrounds can continue to have events that not only support local residents, but especially our children. In some counties, the fair is the only educational opportunity for local children. If you proceed with the proposed funding cuts, it will decimate an already shaky situation due to the economic fallout of the pandemic. Our local fair board donate so much of their time and energy to ensure that events happen year round (not just during fair week) that all of us in the Rogue Valley (especially our schools and children) depend on and look forward to.

Please don't cut our funding at the worst time possible.

Thank you,

Jewell

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Thank you.



Presented By



July 22, 2020

Dear Co-Chairs Marsh and Wagner and Committee Members;

I trust you are finding ways to enjoy this beautiful summer in spite of all of the disruption.

I am writing today to implore you to please reconsider the potential \$1 million in cuts of lottery fund allocations to fairs. While county fairs have not been "entertaining" this season, due to COVID, we have been faithfully fulfilling our base mission serving the agriculture and education fields. Kids in Jackson County who have been raising animals through 4H and FFA programs have just about completed their projects through our facilitation of certified shows and online sales. These kids, and their families, made the sacrifices they needed to make in order to complete their projects and did so within the safety requirements that were both stringent and necessary for this COVID season.

Besides continuing in our agricultural and educational roles, we are on stand-by as a fairground to serve both the impending possibility of wildfire camps as well as potentially alternate housing for farm workers who may be unhoused due to COVID.

It is possible that there are folks in powerful decision-making roles near you who do not see *our* validity in community service and structure. I know you do. I know you understand your fairgrounds and Expo park here in Central Point. You know we serve over 300,000 people a year through this campus AND we have been self-sufficient as an enterprise fund since 2015.

Facing the reality of no events, no rental income and now possibly losing lottery allocations is devastating. As the director, I have mitigated expenses and have decreased staff to 1 FTE. At this moment my fear is the duration of the closures and restrictions. *I need to know I can count on the funds that were already allocated for this year.* While \$50,000 does not seem like a lot of money to potentially replace, it is. Otherwise, it is ANOTHER \$50,000 that I have to find somewhere in this less-than-stable-environment. Our sponsors base their giving on marketing opportunities that are currently unavailable. Our guests pay for events that are currently unavailable. Our rental clients are restricted to the number of guests they are allowed to host and therefore cannot afford to rent facilities and host events. This is a no-win for an organization that has been in solid standing for several years. Please do not add to this downfall by making cuts to fairgrounds funding all over the state.

Stars Shine at the expo



Presented By



Your fairgrounds will continue to serve as long as we can- but if we cannot afford to stay open, we will not be able to serve.

Thank you for your consideration and your support.
Yours in Service,

Helen Funk
Director, Jackson County Fairgrounds and Expo Park

Attachment: Written copy of testimony given over the phone 7/22/20 @ 1:20p

Stars Shine at the expo

Good afternoon and thank you Co-Chairs Marsh and Wagner and committee members. Thank you for hearing my testimony for stabilizing fair funds today and for our future. My name is Helen Funk and I am the Director of the Jackson County Fairgrounds and Expo Park in Central Point Oregon.

We are of the understanding fairs have been recommended as one of the budgetary “cuts” or adjustments for up to \$1Million dollars from the 2019-21 lottery allocation.

While many would never stop to think what \$50 thousand dollars means to an organization in county government,

I am a director of one of these

and I am here to explain the depth and breadth of what those funds mean.

The 36 county fairs all have one major mission in common... to educate youth. Throughout the 365 days of a year we all host various educational opportunities for youth at our facilities. Fair time is fun time for sure but the other events that lead up to the grand finale are equally if not more-so important. These kids come to learn how to take care of their animals. They have workshops, lessons, clinics and hours of prep time with their animals or craft to prepare for shows, auctions and productions. Our buildings, arenas, barns are used throughout the year to train up future homemakers, ranchers, and professional business leaders. AND THESE LOTTERY DOLLARS are used to keep the facilities maintained and operable.

The 2020 Fair season in action now and has been since May. Many of us, Jackson County included, have already seen our kids through their 4H and FFA project completion through COVID regulated activities. We have weighed in, shown and sold over 500 animals at the Jackson Co. Fairgrounds thus far and we have goats to complete the year in September. We have ensured the ability to cover this season but we have very low reserves for our future and are extremely concerned that the revenue we had planned is no longer coming. These state funds are leveraged locally to produce events and rent facilities which help to secure sponsorships, donations and volunteers for the facility.

Concern builds when I think about our future and the possibility of having to limit our hours, close buildings/arenas, and even close for the winter season in order to preserve the finances we have while we wait for the COVID season to end.

Closing potentially means losing sponsors, volunteers and the faith of our communities. It means we aren't available for the youth or the other organizations who need us throughout the entire year.

Your Jackson County Fairground operates like most. We serve in emergency response as housing for both citizens and large animals. We host command centers, fire camps and now COVID response teams. We are the hub in our community and have several MOUs with schools as their emergency evacuation location. We all remember the day that UCC came to the Douglas County Fairgrounds and opened a reunification center for the families involved in the active shooter incident. This event spurred many school districts to get contracts in place with fairgrounds around the state. Where will kids go if we aren't open and they need a mass gathering location in their community?

I can assure you that \$1Million dollars lost to fairs across the state will be devastating and the repercussions of the loss will be long. Please reconsider this decision and keep your assets intact around the state. Kids, families, communities are counting on their fairgrounds to stay open for their needs. You can help us keep them operable for their future. THANK YOU ALL for your consideration and your tireless efforts to rebalance our states budget. You are warriors for sure.

Rob wagner; wa co

Pam marsh; Jackson

Greg smith

Dallas heard; douglas co

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government.

I am concerned about the plan to cut funding for County Fairs. I live in Grant County and our County Fair is having their 111th continuous fair this year. This is huge for this small depressed county, in that it provides a place for our youth, 4-H and FFA to continue to participate in learning about our agricultural way of life that provides food for the World. No where else do these young people get this opportunity to get this hands on experience.

The fair grounds in our area also provide a place for people to meet for meetings, fund raisers, funerals, weddings, etc. since we have no other venue large enough for these events. If the funding is taken away the opportunity to be able to keep this facility going will be diminished and that will have a huge impact on our rural area. Our Fair Manager already struggles to be able to make this fair facility a better place for our County and Community since money in these rural areas is already tight. We need all the help we can get from our State Government to keep our small Counties alive. Please reconsider this issue.

There are surely other places that can be cut to be able to do better than this for our county fairs.

Thank you for reading this. Sincerely Mary Ellen Brooks, Grant County Taxpayer and Fair Supporter for 82 years.



Distinguished members of the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee General Government,

I am writing you today to show my support as an Oregonian for fully funding county fairs.

Each county fair receives equal funding of \$50,000 annually from Oregon Lottery and before you is an option to cut this funding in half due to the financial impact of the Global Pandemic.

A fairgrounds exists in each county to not only hold an annual county fair, but to serve in emergencies for fire camps, animal rescue operations, Warming Shelters for the Houseless and now even Covid PPE collection centers.

Reducing the funding will greatly impact each county fair budget which has already been greatly impacted due to the cancellation of every event including the county fair itself.

I proudly serve on the Jackson County Fair board and we have spent the last six + years turning our county fair around financially. The money we have been able to save, will run out by the end of this year.

Most fairs in Oregon will not be as fortunate. This \$25,000 cut that has been proposed may eliminate the staff completely in many if not most counties.

I strongly encourage you to fully fund the county fairs in Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jim Teece
864 Neil Creek Road
Ashland, OR 97520

541-227-8188 (cell)

Jim@projecta.com

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Jim Teece



To Whom it May Concern:

In answer of the questions as to why the state should fund fairs when they aren't even running this season:

Klamath County will still be having a fair. The things that will not be included in the fair this year are the things that bring in funds to help balance out the costs. Things like vendor payments, carnival commissions, concessions, and entertainment events are how we obtain the funds to put on the fair for the community. We will be hosting the youth livestock show and auction, as well as the youth static exhibit contests.

The costs that we will incur, or have already, are:

Item	Amount
Advertising	\$1,080.00
Preparations	\$14,922.25
Judging	\$9,000.00
Staffing	\$112,000.00
Total	\$137,002.25

The Klamath County Fairgrounds/Event Center supports the youth year-round. In 2019, we gave back over \$215,000.00 to the community in donations and free or reduced rentals. Of that amount, at least 50% of that was directly given back to the youth of the community.

The estimated number of youths that are involved with events at the fairgrounds throughout the year is well over 20,000. In some aspect, youth are involved and benefit from over 80% of our events. Of that estimated 20,000 approximately 30% of that is from the County fair. That means that the rest of the year, the other 70% are getting that benefit. If we do not receive this funding, it is going to be detrimental to the budget for the remainder of the year.

The net revenue that we estimate is earned during the fair that goes into supporting these programs the rest of the year is \$791,000. This includes the money that the kids earn from selling their animals, the donations made to various youth groups, and the wages earned by youth that are hired during fair. Each summer, the fairgrounds hires about 20 kids to work throughout the summer. We estimate that another 200 kids are hired throughout the fair for other vendors and contracts as well.

In closing, we believe that the Fairs are more than justified in continuing to receive these funds. Just because the income has stopped, doesn't mean that all of the expenses have. Please consider this when making your decision.

Respectfully,

Derrick Rowley
Manager

Klamath County Fairgrounds/Event Center

Dear Co-Chairs Wagner and Marsh,

I have been performing at fairs since 1998. I've been a member of the Oregon Fairs Association for 20 years. For the past two and a half years, I've been serving on the OFA board as the Service Member Director. My personal experience of the financial impact of this year's Coronavirus pandemic is echoed by every service member in our organization. We are the people both behind the scenes and out in front; we are the joy bringers, the entertainers, educators, carnival companies, talent agencies, sound, light, and stage crews, the vendors, and more. My company's slogan is "We're In The Happiness Business"; we are not able to deliver that promise this year. As a family entertainer and Service Member representative, collective incomes has been wiped out due to the cancellations of fairs in Oregon. Without the Oregon legislature reliably and consistently funding fairs for the future, not only will some rural fairs be tragically forced to cease existence impacting thousands of lives, but we are in danger of losing our livelihoods forever. On behalf of all of the people who participate in the 36 county and one state fair in Oregon, we respectfully request that fair funding be restored to the maximum amount allowable now and forever. Please don't let our great fair heritage disappear due to lack of funding.

Respectfully,

Karen Quest

Chief Operating Cowgirl

Giddyup Productions

We're In The Happiness Business

<https://www.cowgirltricks.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CowgirlTricks/>

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