

POLK COUNTY

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March 22, 2021

Support HB 3173

In the past year, our county fairgrounds and state fair stepped up when our communities need them the most. Through the global pandemic, wildfire relief efforts and now vaccination efforts, our fairgrounds were transformed overnight into testing centers, makeshift hospitals, shelter for thousands of people and animals, and now mass vaccination clinics.

Meanwhile, our fairs, youth education events, cultural festivals, trade shows and exposition, equestrian events, craft & hobby shows, non-profit fundraisers and community social events were almost all cancelled. This left counties and their fairgrounds financially strapped and ineligible for most federal COVID relief funding.

Our fairgrounds which is one of the smallest in the State with only 20 acres is an economic hub in our community. In 2019:

- We hosted 471 events including the Annual Fair, bringing business to local hotels, restaurants, retail establishments and service providers.
- 29 non-profit groups used our fairgrounds to generate \$453,540.00 which was reinvested right back into our community
- 890 volunteers dedicated 17,800 hours of volunteer service

In 2020 after having to cancel 352 events and losing over \$200,000 in revenue we still opened our doors for:

- Wildfire relief, we housed 406 animals and 75 families for over 30 days including a day center to give out donations to needy families that were not housed at the fairgrounds.
- COVID testing
- COVID vaccination

A recent economic study by Oregon State University estimated that fairgrounds generated an economic footprint of approximately \$52 million in output, \$28 million in value-added income and 867 full and part time jobs.

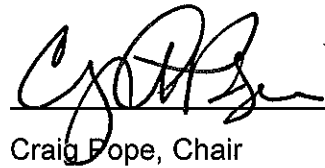
HB 3173 will eliminate an old funding cap put in place years ago and provide an additional investment of approximately \$165,000 per county per year. The also funds a much-needed capital

infrastructure study so that we can make sure fairgrounds are ready for events and more importantly emergency disaster response

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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