



Jefferson County Fair Complex

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Please Support HB3173

I am writing to ask for your support of HB3173, to remove the cap on fair funding from lottery funds. Our fairgrounds operate year-round and not only hosts our annual fair, but continues to support Jefferson County and surrounding areas, especially in times of disaster.

Last summer, we hosted firefighting operations for the Lionshead and P515 fires. For a period of about 6 weeks, our fairgrounds were packed with command centers, communications, catering, operations, medical teams and supplies.

This past year, we used one of our buildings to receive and store incoming PPE and, last fall, we began hosting bi-weekly drive-through COVID-19 testing to provide our county an easy and centrally located place to find out if they were infected. Thousands of community members were able to be tested, giving them peace of mind during a very stressful time.

Our fair complex is a critical emergency response asset for local law enforcement and public safety. We are an emergency evacuation location for the Red Cross, we serve as a reunification facility for the local school district, we are a training location for State and Local SWAT teams, and we host animals who have been evacuated during extreme weather and natural disasters.

In the past few years, we have seen our payroll expenses skyrocket. Health insurance and PERS have increased dramatically, making a huge impact on our tight budget. These ever-growing payroll expenses mean that we have less capitol to make improvements, hire staff and present a high-quality county fair. In most of our counties, the county fair is the highlight of the year, bringing together rural, agricultural and urban populations to gain a greater understanding each of us plays in the economy.

Even during the pandemic, in 2020 we were able to host a youth fair, with 4H and FFA students showing and selling their project animals, garnering over \$650,000 to be put back into the economy. In 2019 more than 450 hours of volunteer time was donated, and fundraisers held at the fairgrounds benefitted groups and individuals with more than \$792,000 being reinvested in our community through auctions and donations.

By receiving the additional funding from HB3173 it will allow us to begin catching up on more than 30 years of deferred maintenance around our facility. It could allow us to hire additional staff, thereby improving the level of service beyond what we can offer with our current two-person team.

We are more than just a fair. 2020 proved that we are a critical facility to support and protect the community in times of need. We need additional funding to effectively do this, which is why we need your support on HB3173.

Respectfully,

Brian Crow
Fairgrounds Coordinator