



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **FRESNO COUNTY RESIDENTS CELEBRATED 125 YEARS OF TRADITION AND FUN AT THE 2008 BIG FRESNO FAIR**

**Fresno, CA...October, 15, 2008...**The Big Fresno Fair is pleased to announce the successful completion of the 2008 Big Fresno Fair, which ran October 1<sup>st</sup> through October 13<sup>th</sup>. Fairgoers from throughout the Central Valley, and beyond, enjoyed the Fair's newest permanent attractions including: the **Kings Canyon Gate Entrance** with its waterfalls and more than 600 tons of rock and new **Infield Parking Entrance**, a replica of the 1890 Grandstand; **Dairyville USA**, that featured the first-ever replica of an energy-producing methane digester to be built on a state fair facility and the **Land O'Lakes Butter Barn Laser Shooting Gallery**, both located in Table Mountain Rancheria Park; plus horse racing track improvements including the newly remodeled tote board and more than 4,000 trees planted since 2006, as well as the largest amount of horses raced (871 horses in 106 races) that The Big Fresno Fair has seen in recent years.

Continuing to uphold its mission "to educate, celebrate and have fun," The Big Fresno Fair featured numerous educational exhibits including: the new **Crystal AG Ventureland**, featuring hands on stations for kids to learn how to milk a cow, rope a steer and so much more; the **Modern Marvels in the Central Valley**, which provided fairgoers with the unique opportunity to learn (and see) the agricultural inventions of the last 125 years that have helped shape our region; and the first-ever **PG&E Clean & Green Day**, which featured an expo with more than 25 exhibitors providing valuable education on how to live a more "green lifestyle."

In light of the nation's turbulent economic state, The Big Fresno Fair was focused on providing the largest amount of discounts possible throughout the Fair's run including pre-sale

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discounts for admission, Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristbands and Corporate Packs. Returning savings days were: Seniors' Day (10/1), Kids' Day (10/2), \$2 Tuesday (10/7), Special Interest Day (10/6) and Bud Light Discount Days (10/8 & 10/9). New savings days provided were \$3 Monday (10/6), which included \$5 off the Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristband and 2-For-1 Admission on PG&E Clean & Green Day (10/13). Through the FAX Shuttle and the Clovis Transit, new in 2008, the Fair provided free rides to the Fair for more than 3,600 patrons.

Traditional fun Fair attractions were back again this year including: the best of the County's agriculture, livestock and competitive exhibits; 11 days of horseracing; free family-fun adventures in Table Mountain Rancheria Park; carnival rides; free shows on the Pavilion, Stella Artois Blues & Brews, Budweiser Cantina and Wine Garden stages and various grounds entertainment; plus time-honored Fair food and more. The Table Mountain Concert Series line-up in the Paul Paul Theater was as exciting and demographically diverse as ever before with top sellers Demi Lovato, Chicago and Pepe Aguilar.

The 2008 Big Fresno Fair unaudited attendance totaled 542,717 a decrease of 1.05% from the reported 2007 attendance totaling 548,503. Concession numbers were short by less than .05%.

“On our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I am ecstatic about our numbers in light of the current economy. We definitely weathered the unstable economic times with daily breaking news about the stock market, first time Government assisted bailout and the difficult housing market. Despite it all, The Big Fresno Fair pushed forward to provide the community with a family-friendly and affordable entertainment venue. In return, our community stepped up and supported their Fair, by celebrating its birthday and sharing their valued entertainment budget with us,” said Big Fresno Fair CEO, John C. Alkire. “The connection that this Fair has with its community is definitely apparent and we work hard each day to prepare the Fairgrounds for their annual visit and to ensure the highest level of customer service to keep them coming back.”

“The weather held for 12 of the 13 Fair days however, rain and the threat of continued showers did affect general attendance on the first Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>,” said Alkire.

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Large horse numbers provided full race cards (10 horses per race) on 30 of the 106 races ran and the track averaged 8.2 horses per race. Additionally, track improvements such as the paddock, remodeled tote board, the more than 4,000 trees and grass in the Infield, enhanced the look of the track which yielded an unprecedented 44% increase in out-of-state satellite wagering, while -2% on All Sources Live. “This proves that horse racing is a BIG part of the tradition at the Fair and Central Valley residents wait all year to come out and wager on the live horse racing,” said Alkire.

The Junior Livestock Auction faired well with showing nearly 7% less animals sold from the previous year and still raising approximately \$750,000 to benefit 4H and FFA program members.

Planning is already underway for the 2009 Big Fresno Fair, which will include expanded Clean & Green initiatives, more free family-friendly entertainment in the Table Mountain Rancheria Park, including a new educational water exhibit that will teach Fairgoers about the importance of water and its many uses in our region, plus enhancements to existing infrastructure throughout the Fairgrounds. The 2009 Big Fresno Fair will run October 7<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> and will mark the 126<sup>th</sup> year of this valued tradition.

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