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BIG ENTERTAINMENT, BIG DISCOUNTS, BIG EDUCATION & BIG CROWDS DEFINE THE 2012 BIG FRESNO FAIR WITH RECORD SETTING NUMBERS

Fresno, CA...October 15, 2012... The Big Fresno Fair's Board of Directors, Management and staff are pleased to announce the successful completion of the 2012 Big Fresno Fair, which ran October 3 – 14. On closing day of the 2012 Fair, loyal guests packed the grounds for a final day of entertainment, food, education and fun, rounding out what Fair organizers call "a fantastic Fair for all."

The 129th edition of The Big Fresno Fair marked three BIG records. Opening Day, October 3, drew large crowds with its new \$1 Wednesday Mania promotion providing \$1 admission and \$1 carnival rides for all, drawing in over 60,000 people and making it the most successful Opening Day in recent history. Then on Thursday, October 11, the "Feed the Need" Community Food Drive was held in partnership with The Salvation Army, Community Food Bank and valued media partners, raising 153,082.43 pounds, or 76.5 tons, of food for the community – breaking its own national record for the largest single day, single location food drive with a 42% increase in donations. The effort was supported by over 300 volunteers who donated their time from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. collecting 5 cans of food per person as they entered the Fair for free in exchange for their food contribution. The success of this year's food drive is attributed to an increase of cash donations from Fair patrons, local businesses, outreach efforts of The Big Fresno Fair Board of Directors and a very generous donation of food (20,000 pounds) provided by Wawona Frozen Foods. On the final Saturday of the Fair with two big concerts in the Paul Paul Theater – Ariana Grande with local star Ryan Beatty for the matinee show and then TYGA performing to a sellout crowd in the evening – plus plenty of free entertainment, exhibit buildings and, of course, food and horse racing, the Fair drew in a record number of people with 85,500 people attending the Fair on that day alone.

Fairgoers were greeted by a variety of new attractions which included the "Cloud Tank" purchased from Lucasfilm Ltd. on display as part of the Meyers Water & Wildlife Tree in Table Mountain Rancheria Park, the World Discovery Exhibit, Splash Dogs, the ESPN Fresno State Bulldog on the northeast side of the Livestock Pavilion roof, an expanded Kiddle Land Carnival area returning to its location inside the horse racing track, the new White Water Flume ride in the Main Carnival and, of course, all the fabulous new and returning Fair food



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vendors! The Big Fresno Fair has continued to move forward and make BIG improvements while maintaining their mission to celebrate, educate and have fun each and every year!

Powered by deep discounts – both pre-Fair and Fair-time – crowds turned out in big numbers for the 2012 Fair despite a struggling economy. Pre-Fair deals included the second annual “Pint for a Pass” blood drive during the months of June and July offering a “buy one, get one free” voucher good for admission on any day of the Fair. Through this partnership with the Central California Blood Center, more than 11,000 pints of blood were donated to support the 31 hospitals throughout Fresno, Tulare, Madera, Kings, and Mariposa counties that have such a great need for blood, especially during the summer months. Other pre-Fair discounts included the Season Pass, a popular money-saving opportunity providing unlimited admission to the Fair for just \$25; up to a \$10 discount for Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristbands; plus \$2 off admission when purchasing early at participating Save Mart & FoodMaxx locations. Fair-time discounts included *new* \$1 Wednesday Mania (10/3); Carnival Ride Wednesdays (10/3, 10/10); CalViva Health Kids’ Day (10/4); EyeQ Seniors Day presented by PG&E and Humana (10/8); Special Interest Day (10/8); Save Mart Supermarkets & FoodMaxx \$2 Tuesday (10/9); *new* United Local Credit Union America Heroes’ Day presented by Port of Subs (10/10) and the “Feed the Need” Community Food Drive (10/11).

Again this year, The Big Fresno Fair continued several programs that recognize the achievements of the community’s brightest scholars, agricultural leaders and talented individuals. This year the 2nd Annual 4.0 & Above Program was held in partnership with Fresno County Office of Education and supported by EECU and Toyota where Fresno County high school students whose cumulative GPA was 4.0 or higher, were invited to enter the Fair for free on Opening Day. They also were able to enter-to-win in a random drawing for amazing prizes including; (6) \$3,000 scholarships, a 2012 Toyota Corolla L, (2) iPads, (3) mountain bikes and other assorted prizes, all donated by community members and organizations. Over 4,500 students, their families and friends packed the Brian I. Tatarian Grandstand in this rally-like event to watch as winning tickets were drawn for students who were present. The top prize winner was Lauren Meyers from Buchanan High School who proudly won a 2012 Toyota Corolla L on her actual 16th birthday.

The Big Band Review, also in its second year, was host to 22 Junior High and High School marching bands awarding \$13,500 in a variety of prize categories with Clark Intermediate School receiving \$1,500 and Washington Union High School receiving \$2,000 as top prizes.

These new and returning attractions, discount opportunities and longstanding traditions brought out big crowds to the 2012 Big Fresno Fair. The 2012 Big Fresno Fair **unaudited attendance** totaled 577,480 an increase of 5.15% from 2011. The shortage of horses in California did have an effect on live horse racing at the Fair, which saw a decrease of 7% in on-track handle but did bring out crowds during its 9-day meet.



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“In order for our Fair to be successful, we have to be a positive reflection of and have a deep connection with our community. We were focused on providing lots of discount opportunities, plenty of free entertainment and educational elements for families to enjoy,” said Alkire. “We want generations of families to all have treasured memories of the Fair because that is what this tradition is all about.”

The overall success of the Fair can be attributed to the community who loves and supports their Fair. Many families stayed local for their entertainment and The Big Fresno Fair provided a family-friendly and affordable option. Planning is already underway for the 2013 Big Fresno Fair, which will run October 2 – 14 and will mark the 130th year of this valued tradition.

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