



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CONTACTS:**

**Danielle Griffin**  
Cell: 559-994-3133

**Debbie Nalchajian-Cohen**  
Cell: 559-281-1312

### **2017 BIG FRESNO FAIR BOASTS ATTENDANCE INCREASE AND THE SAFEST FAIR ON-RECORD**

*Abundant new attractions and events, big savings, record number of sold-out concerts and more credited!*

**Fresno, CA...October 18, 2017...** The Big Fresno Fair's Board of Directors, Management and staff are thrilled to announce the successful completion of the 2017 Big Fresno Fair, which ran October 4 -15. During the 12-day run of the Fair, guests were treated to a wide variety of new and free attractions such as the Bug-Ology Exhibit, Timberworks Lumberjack Show, Walk on the Wild Side Cat Exhibit and The Water Shed projection mapping module, along with the addition of the Community Cultural Center in the Fresno County Historical Museum and the Fresno Motel, Louie Kee Market and Eddie's Speed Shop signs. That, coupled with an incredible entertainment line-up, which included a record number of sold-out shows (Chris Young, Chicago, Ice Cube, Gabriel Iglesias, Ja Rule & Ashanti and Ramon Ayala) as part of the Table Mountain Concert Series, the first-ever Big Fresno Fair Craft Brew Fest, great discounts, exciting live horse racing, a strong Jr. Livestock Auction, plus the new weekend admissions policies that provided the most safe, family-friendly environment in years – all making for a great 134<sup>th</sup> annual The Big Fresno Fair!

"I could not be more proud of the Fair we were able to put forth this year for the community to enjoy" said John C. Alkire, CEO of The Big Fresno Fair. "We had the largest number of new attractions and entertainment to feature, great savings opportunities and the safest Fair we've had in years! The new admissions policy really shifted the crowds on weekends; you saw more families out at the Fair later at night and that's a heart-warming sight!"

For only the third time in the Fair's 134-year history it broke 600,000 people in attendance as a 12-day event. Final attendance for the 12 days of the 2017 Big Fresno Fair attendance was 609,036, an increase of 0.52% over last year. Those big crowds that turned out really did enjoy the Fair to its fullest, resulting in a 5.08% increase in concessions. The Jr. Livestock Auctions (10/7 and 10/14) also experienced a record year thanks to resounding support from the community for the young 4-H and FFA members who were showing animals. While add-ons are still being processed, total sales are estimated to be in excess of \$920,000, which is an increase from last year's record-breaking total of \$916,000.

A favorite Fair tradition for many is live horse racing! This year's horse racing meet showed strong numbers, drawing out big crowds during the 9 days of live horse racing, resulting in an increase of 0.94% on All Sources Live,



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which includes wagering both on-track and throughout Northern California. This year's Fair also featured the very first Big Fresno Fair Craft Brew Fest held inside the horse racing track during live racing. The event saw attendance of nearly 1,000 people who sampled beers from 30 breweries while enjoying music, lawn games and delicious food trucks from a unique vantage point inside the race track.

"All in all this year's Fair was a resounding success and that is due to the support of our community and involvement of our vendors, entertainers, safety partners and more! I would like to thank each and every one of you for your role in this year's Fair," continued Alkire.

The Fair Management team continued to stay focused on providing affordable ways for families to attend the Fair, providing a plethora of discounts both pre-Fair and during the Fair. Popular pre-Fair discounts included the \$28 Season Passes available at O'Reilly's Auto Part stores; up to a \$7 discount for Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristbands; plus \$2 off admission at participating Save Mart & FoodMaxx locations. Fair-time discounts included \$1 Wednesday (10/4); "Fans & Followers" Day & \$2 Carnival Rides (10/5); Table Mountain "The Club" Members Reward Offer (10/5) Seniors' Day presented by Eye-Q and Humana (10/9); Special Interest Day (10/9); Les Schwab Tires \$2 Tuesday (10/10); Sun-Maid Kids' Day & \$2 Carnival Ride Wednesday (10/11); and the Save Mart & FoodMaxx "Feed the Need" Food Drive (10/12). The Save Mart & FoodMaxx "Feed the Need" Food Drive effort resulted in 79,470 lbs. of food being collected on-site Thursday, October 12 from 11 a.m. – 8 p.m., which was a 13,593 lb. increase over the 2016 collection totals (which were 65,877 lbs.)! All this food will go to the Community Food Bank and The Salvation Army. This drive is in addition to the early "Feed the Need" Food Drive held at Fresno State that resulted in 39,500 lbs. collected that went direct to the Fresno State Student Cupboard, providing free food to students in need. The overall Save Mart & FoodMaxx "Feed the Need" Food Drive effort is supported by Wells Fargo, plus media partners Univision Fresno, CBS 47 and One-Putt Broadcasting.

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's 7th Annual 4.0 & Above Program presented by Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, Friends of the Big Fresno Fair, EECU, Toyota and iHeart Media, gave away a record number of scholarships (32 in total!) to Fresno County students. All students grades 8-12 whose academic performance has awarded them a 4.0 or above grade point average as of their 2017 Spring semester were invited to the Fair for free on Opening Day (10/4) for the chance to win scholarships totaling \$84,000, (6) laptops, (3) Apple iPads, (6) \$100 Visa gift cards, as well as a new Toyota Corolla that was available exclusively to 9th through 12th grade students. The 2017 Toyota Corolla was proudly donated by Toyota, and a variety of community members and organizations stepped up to fund the scholarships. Edison High School freshman, Michelle Salazar was the lucky winner of the new car.



Whether it was the attractions, competitive exhibits, free entertainment, live horse racing, carnival rides, Table Mountain Rancheria Park, Fair food or concerts that brought people out, there was no doubt that the community sure does love their Big Fresno Fair. Many families chose to stay local for their entertainment and the Fair provided them a family-friendly and affordable option. Planning is already underway for the 2018 Big Fresno Fair, which will run October 3 -14 and will mark the 135<sup>th</sup> year of this valued tradition.

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