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BIG FRESNO FAIR KICKS OFF COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN FOR THE NEW FRESNO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Museum partners gather for beam signing and share details of exhibits slated for the new Museum

Fresno, California – June 9, 2015: More than 30 people turned out for The Big Fresno Fair’s this morning to celebrate the construction progress of the new \$2.8 million building that will house the new Fresno County Historical Museum. Representatives from the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, Fresno County Sheriff’s Office, Fresno Police Department, Fresno Fire Department, Fresno Historical Society, Pop Laval Foundation, Fresno Athletic Hall of Fame, The Fresno Bee and Wells Fargo, as well as members of the Caglia Family along with The Big Fresno Fair Board of Directors, Fair Management Team and the Fair’s non-profit Foundation, Friends of the Big Fresno Fair Board were in attendance, signing their names on the new building.

“History matters. Education matters. It is our responsibility to not only preserve and protect Fresno County’s rich history, but showcase it at the largest annual event in the Central Valley and a year round venue for the public to enjoy and learn from,” stated John Alkire, CEO of The Big Fresno Fair in front of the crowd. “We have been fortunate to have so many community history advocates come forward in support of the Museum and we hope even more will come forward and get involved. Fresno has a lot to be proud of and we need to tell and preserve its stories. The Fresno County Historical Museum will only be as good as the community wants it to be, so we need their continued help.”

One of the biggest capital improvements projects in recent years at the Fresno Fairgrounds, the new two-story building features 7,000 sq. ft. of display space that will be utilized for the new Fresno County Historical Museum. An expansion of the award-winning Big Fresno Fair Museum, the new Fresno County Historical Museum will showcase the broader history of Fresno County, providing a place for future generations to experience its history. Full completion of the Museum and exhibits is expected to take two to three years; however, the first phase is set to be complete by Opening Day of the 2015 Big Fresno Fair on Wednesday, October 7.

A comprehensive fundraising campaign is underway to support the cost of construction of the building, acquisition of historical artifacts and creation of permanent exhibits. The goal is to raise \$1 million by year end. The Big Fresno Fair also announced today the formal launch of a community fundraising drive through Go Fund Me. Formed as a way to get the entire community involved in the new Fresno County Historical Museum, this campaign offers a convenient way that the public can donate whether that is \$5 or \$1,000 – every donation helps and goes towards creating a true community Museum and the first of its kind. The goal for the Go Fund Me community fundraising drive is set at \$75,000 to be raised by October 31, 2015. The Fair’s Go Fund Me page can be found at <http://bit.ly/GoFundMuseum>. For corporate or family legacy donations, please contact Lauri King directly at (559) 650-3228 or lking@fresnofair.com.

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The new Fresno County Historical Museum will feature everything from public safety and military to agriculture and sports history, plus so much more. The ground floor of the Museum, which has roll up doors to accommodate large pieces of memorabilia like tractors, cars and wagons, will feature both permanent and temporary displays from the Fresno Athletic Hall of Fame, Blackie Gejeian, Fresno Police Department, Fresno Fire Department, Fresno County Sheriff's Office, Fresno County Farm Bureau, Fresno Historical Society, Central California SPCA and the Legion of Valor/Veterans Memorial Museum. Featured items include a 1878 hand pump and a 1913 Fire Truck from the Fresno Fire Department, a section of the 1874 Sugar Pine Flume and the famous 1895 "Boy with a Leaky Boot" fountain statue.

The second floor of the building will feature both permanent and temporary displays from the Fresno Historical Society, The Fresno Bee, Caglia Family, Pop Laval Foundation, Wells Fargo and more. Featured items include a replica of an old Fresno Courthouse courtroom complete with 100-year old preserved courtroom furnishing and two of the Goddesses of Justice that were once perched on top of the old Courthouse. The iconic 1875 Cupola will be displayed on the south side of the Paul Paul Theater, viewable from the second floor of the Museum. The old 1947 Mars Drive-In sign will displayed on the eastside of the Paul Paul Theater that will also be viewable from the second floor of the Museum. Exhibits honoring William Saroyan, J.E. O'Neill and California Chrome among others are also planned. Additionally, a professional photo wrap of iconic features of Fresno over the past 120 years has been donated by Wells Fargo will be featured on one of the walls. The second floor also includes conference room that will be utilized for Board and other meetings, as well as a deck overlooking the Paul Paul Theater that will be available for use by Fair sponsors and VIPs.

Organizations or individuals interested in being part of the new Fresno County Historical Museum, whether that is through sponsorship, donations of historical artifacts or providing resources are encouraged to contact The Big Fresno Fair directly at (559) 650-FAIR.

About The Big Fresno Fair:

The Big Fresno Fair, founded in 1884, is the fifth largest fair in the state of California and represents the 21st District Agricultural Association. More than 650,000 people from throughout the State visit The Big Fresno Fair each year making it the largest annual event in the Central Valley. Members of the Board of Directors include: Leta Ciavaglia, President; Debbie Jacobsen, Vice President; Jerry Pacheco, Secretary/Treasurer; Elizabeth Hudson; Linda Mae Balakian Hunsucker; Larry Serpa; Ricky Vang; Dora Westerlund and William White. John C. Alkire heads the daily operations in his role as CEO. The 2015 Big Fresno Fair will run October 7 – 18. For more information about The Big Fresno Fair, please visit www.FresnoFair.com.

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