



June 7-11, 2017
Five Best Days of Summer

35th District Agricultural Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE 2017 MERCED COUNTY FAIR DEEMED A SUCCESS; BROUGHT THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR FIVE DAYS OF TRADITION AND FUN *Despite rainfall on final day, the Fair shows a slight increase in attendance*

MERCED, CALIFORNIA – June 15, 2017: The Merced County Fair's Board of Directors, Management and staff are thrilled to announce the successful completion of the 2017 Merced County Fair, which ran June 7-11. The community truly came together in a big way to help give back and enjoy the tradition and fun of the Merced County Fair with five days of incredible entertainment, delicious food, carnival rides, great exhibits, attractions and more! The 2017 Merced County Fair unaudited attendance total during the five days was 72,338 people, a slight increase of .04% from last year's record-breaking total of 72,311 people (adjusted audited attendance). Overall paid attendance was also up 2.3%. All of this was accomplished despite unpredictable weather, including a thunder and lightning storm on the final day of the Fair.

"We had a great run this year and gave the community an even better Fair than last year," said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair. "We brought in some new, free attractions on-grounds such as the Lorikeet Encounter and the All-Alaskan Racing Pigs. We also had camel rides this year and a new grandstand show, Battle of the Bulls. Additionally, thanks to First 5 Merced County we were able to provide mothers with a private air-conditioned space for them to nurse and change their babies. All in all, I am so happy with this year's Fair and I want to thank the community for coming out to support us!"

Affordability was a big focus on Fair Management, which is why a variety of both pre-Fair and Fair-time discounts were provided. Prior to the Fair, people could save \$2 on Adult Admission and \$5 on Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristbands when purchased at participating Rancho San Miguel Markets and O'Reilly Auto Parts. Additionally, a \$10 discount on a 5-pack of Adult Admission tickets was available online or at the Merced County Fair Administration Office. All pre-Fair savings were available through June 6. The savings continued as the Fair opened with the new Mercy Medical Center's "We Care Wednesday" which is all about giving back! On Wednesday, June 7 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. people could get into the Fair for free when they brought five or more cans of food to donate. This was part of the Community Food Drive effort, presented by EECU and University Industrial Park, and supported by UC Merced. A total of 7,088 lbs. of food was collected, marking a 46.7% increase over last year's food drive total 4,800 lbs. All food was donated to the Merced County Food Bank to aid in their fight against hunger. Additionally, opening day was Seniors' Day where seniors 62 and better get into the Fair for free all evening long. Then Thursday, June 8 was Kids' Day presented by Golden Valley Health Centers, where kids 12 and under got into the Fair for free!

Another great service provided to Fairgoers was the free rides to the Fair provided by The Bus from throughout 23 stops in Merced area. A total of 744 passengers took advantage of these free rides to and from the Fair, and more than 10,000 free trips were taken system-wide during the "Free Fares to the Fair" promotion. Additionally, admission tickets were sold on The Bus at a \$2 discount!



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New this year in the Grandstand, the Fair held a “Battle of the Bulls” competition where bulls were graded and judged to see which bull was the toughest to ride! That event drew big crowds of cheering fans along with each other night of entertainment including Auto Racing, Monster Trucks & Motocross, plus the Valley Tractor Pullers thanks to sponsors Table Mountain, Coors Light, O’Reilly Auto Parts and Rancho San Miguel. Fairgoers also enjoyed free live music and entertainment on the Coors Light Stage and the Bear Creek Plaza Stage, not to mention the Outdoor Theatre where an incredible array of musical acts played as part of the Table Mountain Free Concert Series presented by Coors Light. The top notch line-up included I Am King...The Michael Jackson Experience (6/7), John Michael Montgomery (6/8), WAR (6/9), Moonshine Bandits (6/10) and Noel Torres (6/11).

Fairgoers also enjoyed thrilling carnival rides provided by Butler Amusements, which had 36 rides in total. Favorites were the Inversion, Vertigo and the classic Fair-favorite Ferris wheel. The new Lorikeet Encounter and All-Alaskan Racing Pigs were big hits in the Sunshine Lane Family Area, as well as the Pony Rides, Petting Zoo and Walk on Water Balls! Additionally, concessionaires were pleased as Fairgoers showed up to try their Fair favorites, as well as new Fair treats like Eddie’s Chinese Food, Wild Bill’s Roasted Corn and BJ’s Frozen Custard.

As always, livestock was a big draw at the Fair with a variety of shows taking place over the course of the week of the Fair. The Rabbit Auction on Thursday, June 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hilmar Cheese Barn saw the sale of 148 rabbits generating \$29,125 in sales; that is 38 more rabbits than last year providing an 11.4% increase in total sales. Then that same day in the Les McCabe Arena presented by American Ag Credit, the Dairy Replacement Heifer Sale generated \$227,600 from 70 heifers sold. That was 17 more heifers than the year prior and an increase of 29.8% in sales. On Saturday, June 10, the Junior Livestock Auction, sponsored by American Ag Credit and Coldwell Solar, also held in the Hilmar Cheese Barn was a resounding success generating \$618,364 in sales by 4-H, FFA and Independent Exhibitors, a 9.99% increase over last year’s sales totals. A total of 618 goats, pigs, lambs and beef were sold this year, compared to 609 animals in 2016.

The Merced County Fair would also like to recognize these top buyers from 2017, who received the following awards at this year’s Fair:

- Buyer of the Year, Fat Stock Sale – Jim Wolf, Flow Transportation
- Buyer of the Year, Dairy Heifer Replacement Sale – Eddie Hoekstra, Hillcrest Dairy
- Buyer of the Year, Small Animal Sale – Doug and Kelly Aue, Diamond Bar Cattle
- Outstanding Service Award Winner – Marc Coleman, Hilmar

More than 4,566 entries were received and displayed in the five competitive exhibit buildings - Jr. Ag Mechanics, Floriculture, Emanuel Medical Center Arts Pavilion, Ag Exhibits presented by MID Water & Power and Home Arts - this does not include the 1,618 animals on display in Livestock. Also, a big thank you to our 2017 competitive exhibits sponsor, the Merced Sun-Star who helped make it possible to keep most of the categories entirely free to enter!



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“I want to say thank you to our community for continually supporting the Merced County Fair, even braving the crazy weather we had this year! I would also like to thank everyone who makes the Fair possible each year – our exhibitors, concessionaires, carnival provider, entertainers, volunteers and staff! I look forward to next year!” exclaimed Burrola.

The 2018 Merced County Fair will run June 6 -10. Be sure to sign up for the Merced County Fair’s free email newsletter to stay up-to-date on information. Or connect with the Fair on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

About The Merced County Fair:

The Merced County Fair, first founded in 1891, represents the 35th District Agricultural Association and is celebrating 126 years of operation this year. More than 70,000 people from throughout Merced County and beyond attend the five-day Merced County Fair each June. Members of the Board of Directors include: President; Flip Hassett, First Vice President; Emily Haden, Second Vice President; Lori Gallo; Vicky Banaga; Mark Erreca; Lee Lor; Kim Rogina; Carol Sartori-Silva; and Dr. Santokh Takhar. Teresa Burrola heads up the daily operations in her role as CEO. The 2018 Merced County Fair will run June 6 - 10. For more information about the Merced County Fair, please visit www.MercedCountyFair.com. Connect with the Fair on Facebook (@mercedfair), Twitter (@Merced_CA_Fair) and now Instagram (@mercedcountyfair).

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