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Merced County Fair Selected For Facility Improvement Project

State funds designated to improve California fairgrounds for overall operations and use as emergency response sites

MERCED, CALIFORNIA, February 4, 2020 – The Merced County Fair is proud to announce it has been selected by the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) Fairs & Expositions Branch to receive funding from the State’s \$3 million of general fund monies allocated through the Budget Act of 2018, Control Section 6.10. The Merced County Fair is set to receive \$798,950 to install a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system in the fair’s Pavilion building.

“This truly is a game changer for our fairgrounds,” said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair.

“Currently the Pavilion building only has evaporative cooling, which is inadequate during the hot summer months here in the Central Valley. Due to that, we’ve seen a decrease in rentals of this building during that time, which hurts us financially as year round rentals sustain operations outside our annual fair.”

The project selection comes after the fair submitted five projects for consideration as part of the Facility Condition Assessment of California fairgrounds. Out of 74 fairgrounds in California, there were 64 fairgrounds that submitted projects; only 12 projects were selected for the first round of funding. All projects will be overseen and managed by the California Construction Authority (CCA) or the Department of General Services (DGS) and must be completed by March 2022.

In 2017, Assemblyman Adam Gray authored Assembly Bill 1499, which enabled the creation of these funds through a percentage of the sales tax revenue generated on fair properties within the State. “We can’t express our gratitude enough for Assemblyman Gray’s championing of these funds that are critical to the longevity of fairgrounds that serve their communities in so many ways,” said Burrola.

Fairgrounds are not only home to their annual fairs and festivals, but they are critical resources during disaster emergency responses. This was the case in July 2017, when the Merced County Fairgrounds served as the Cal-Fire incident command post and base camp during Detwiler fire in Mariposa that consumed more than 2,500 acres. The Pavilion building was designated as the briefing center; however, given soaring temperatures during the peak of summer and no central air conditioning, these emergency responders were forced to rent



portable air conditioning systems and pipe them into the Pavilion so they could conduct their briefings and continue to battle the fire.

Knowing the installation of a HVAC system in the Pavilion was a key capital improvement project that needed funding – whether through State grants or fundraising – in 2018, Burrola contracted Golden Valley Engineering & Surveying to prepare a cost estimate for the HVAC system with an electrical upgrade to the Pavilion. This proved to be a wise move as the fair was ready to submit its Facility Condition Assessment in early 2019 when the funding opportunity presented itself.

The purpose of the Facility Condition Assessment is to create a master list of priority construction projects for California fairgrounds. The CDFA and CCA will use this list for selection of projects to fund as various funding sources become available. The four other projects submitted by the Merced County Fair were: 1) roof replacement on Administration Office, 2) roof replacement on El Capitan Building, 3) roof and rain gutter replacement on Pavilion, and 4) replacement of heating/cooling units with new units on remaining buildings.

About The Merced County Fair:

The Merced County Fair, first founded in 1891, represents the 35th District Agricultural Association. The fair's mission statement outlines that it "*promises to meet the needs of our community by providing a fun, safe venue to celebrate our area's agricultural heritage, discover new technology and be entertained.*" This year marks the 129th year of operation for the Merced County Fair, which welcomes more than 70,000 people from throughout Merced County and beyond to attend the five-day fair each June. Members of the Board of Directors include: President, Carol Sartoni-Silva; First Vice President, Lee Lor; Second Vice President, Kim Rogina; Vicky Banaga; Mark Erreca; Lori Rossi Gallo; Emily Haden; Flip Hassett; and Luis Lara. Teresa Burrola heads up the daily operations in her role as CEO. The 2020 Merced County Fair will run June 10 - 14. 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 Instagram (@mercedcountyfair).

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