



CEO CAREER ANNOUNCEMENT

MERCED COUNTY FAIR & FACILITY

Founded in 1891, the Merced County Fair (35th District Agricultural Association) annually welcomes 75,000 visitors over a 5-day event, featuring competitive exhibits, live music, Grandstand shows, community performances, carnival rides, livestock exhibitions, attractions, Fair food, and more.

The Merced County Fairgrounds spans 85 acres and includes a 1/3-mile clay race track, a 5,000-person capacity grandstand, 51,000 square feet of indoor gathering space, a 2,000-vehicle parking lot and 40 RV hook-ups. It is home to the Merced Speedway, which operates April – November, as well as the Merced Flea Market every Saturday. In addition, the fairgrounds host more than 200 public and private events year-round, offering a vital community space.

The Fair represents the six incorporated cities of Merced County and 11 urban communities, including Delhi, Hilmar, Le Grand, and Winton, attracting attendees from across the region and beyond.

The Merced County Fair is an economic driver, contributing over \$23 million annually to Merced County, according to an independent 2015 report – this figure has likely increased over time. The Fairgrounds derives its income from these key sources: rental of the facilities for events, Merced Flea Market, Merced Speedway, and the annual Fair. Additionally, the Friends of the Merced County Fair, a separate nonprofit foundation, supports the fair's mission and facility improvements through fundraising efforts.

Beyond its annual fair and year-round events, the Merced County Fairgrounds serves the community in times of emergency, having been activated as an evacuation site and FEMA satellite location during the flooding of Planada and Merced in January 2023, and as a staging site for Cal Fire during the Oak Fire in 2022.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Merced County Fair is governed by a 9-member Board of Directors, appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. The Board empowers the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to implement all policy decisions. Current Board Members are: Mark Erreca, President; Emily Haden, First Vice President; Mark N. Pazin, Second Vice President; Vicky Banaga; Lori Gallo; Luis Lara; Kim Rogina; Carol Sartori-Silva

THE POSITION

The Merced County Fair (35th DAA) is seeking a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to continue its strong traditions and identify opportunities to expand its annual fair and year-round operations. The CEO will report to the Board of Directors and be responsible for managing the annual fair, overseeing the development and utilization of fairgrounds facilities, and leading a team of staff members. The CEO will also manage the budget, build strategic relationships with agricultural, business, and local communities, maintain the reputation of the Merced County Fairgrounds, and ensure compliance with state laws, rules, and regulations. This position is an Exempt Civil Service position and requires working irregular hours and weekends, as well as participating in community activities when applicable. Additional training opportunities with industry partners like the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA), International Association of Fairs & Expositions (IAFE) and Western Fairs Association (WFA) will be provided.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be a skilled individual with management and administrative experience. The ideal candidate will have a strong understanding of the various practices and principles of the fairgrounds and fair operations, public relations, personnel and financial administration, and contract negotiations. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated success in collaborating with various stakeholders, including the community, elected officials, board members, team members, and staff.

Additionally, the ideal candidate will possess the following experience and competencies:

- **Experience & Leadership** – Four years in staff/administrative or management roles handling program/event coordination, public relations, marketing, and promotions (preferably with county or state fairs).
- **Education & Certifications** – Bachelor's degree in business, public administration, marketing, communication, or related field. Equivalent experience or industry certifications (IAFE, facility management, event management) may substitute year-for-year.
- **Financial Management** – Proven success managing a \$2 million budget, financial planning, and revenue growth strategies.
- **Facility & Operations Oversight** – Expertise in facility management, capital improvements, sustainability, and regulatory compliance (ADA, OSHA, safety standards).
- **Community & Stakeholder Engagement** – Strong connections with local and state government, businesses, and agricultural communities; experience fostering partnerships.
- **Agricultural & Livestock Knowledge** – Hands-on experience with agricultural best practices, animal welfare, and fair-integrated programs preferred.
- **Organizational & Crisis Management** – Oversight of all fair operations, including HR, risk management, ticketing, and logistics; skilled in emergency response and public safety.
- **Revenue Development** – Success in sponsorships, fundraising, grants, and securing new revenue streams for long-term growth.
- **Innovation & Sustainability** – Forward-thinking approach to event programming, guest experiences, and environmental responsibility.
- **Communication & Leadership** – Strong public presence, negotiation skills, and an inclusive, team-oriented leadership style that drives results.



COMPENSATION

The position offers a competitive monthly salary ranging from \$9,486 to \$11,627. The benefits package includes:

- **Health, Dental, and Vision plan** – Employee plus family coverage
- **Annual Leave** – Vacation and Sick Leave
- **Life Insurance**
- **California Public Employees Retirement System**

TO APPLY

This is a confidential recruitment process, and references will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, State application (STD 678), and five professional references via email to careers@mercedcountyfair.com.

Application Deadline: May 13, 2025. The first review of resumes will begin shortly after the closing date of the application deadline.

All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to submit their credentials for review and consideration. The Board reserves the right to determine the best combination of education, professional development, and experience for the role.

For questions or to discuss the position further, please contact the CEO Recruitment Committee at careers@mercedcountyfair.com.