



June 7-11, 2023  
Everyone Come Celebrate

35th District Agricultural Association



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **2023 MERCED COUNTY FAIR DECLARED A BIG SUCCESS**

*Diverse entertainment and attractions, big savings and great weather credited for big crowds*

**MERCED, CALIFORNIA – June 19, 2023:** The Merced County Fair's Board of Directors, Management and staff want to thank the community for coming out to support the 2023 Merced County Fair presented by Valley Children's Healthcare, which ran June 7 – 11. The community delivered on this year's Fair theme of "Everyone Come Celebrate" – as big crowds of family and friends headed to the Fair each day of its 5-day run. While Fair Management is still auditing attendance numbers, huge crowds of smiling Fairgoers walked through the gates to enjoy a fun and safe 2023 Merced County Fair with its discounts, dynamic concerts and shows, delicious Fair food, carnival rides, exhibit buildings, livestock shows and sales and, of course, exceptionally great weather.

"We could not have been blessed with better weather at this year's Fair," said Teresa Burrola, CEO, Merced County Fair. "The weather, coupled with the incredible entertainment value the Merced County Fair provides the community, definitely brought people out to enjoy time with one another. We are immensely grateful for this community who came out to enjoy the hard work we put into this year's Merced County Fair, and for the participation of our exhibitors, community performers and more – you all play a special part in making our Fair so great!"

A special Opening Ceremonies kicked off the Fair, at which longtime Fair nonprofit participant Club Mercedes were honored with the Blue Ribbon Award, created by the Western Fairs Association (WFA) to recognize those who support and contribute to the quality of fairs – and is one of the highest honors a Fair can give out.

On the savings front – there were plenty of options! Anyone who donated 5 cans of food from May 10 through June 7 at the Merced or Atwater MERCOCredit Unions received a free admission ticket good for Opening Day of the Fair as part of the "Feed Our Community" food drive benefitting the Merced County Food Bank. A total of 4,013 lbs. of food was collected to help fight hunger in Merced County. For the second year in a row, thanks to presenting sponsor Valley Children's Healthcare, kids 12 and under were free into the Fair every day, providing an incredible savings for families. Plus, Fairgoers were able to save \$5 on Adult Admission and Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristbands when purchased at participating Save Mart and FoodMaxx locations, as well as O'Reilly Auto Parts stores for the discounted admission both before and throughout the Fair. The savings continued as the Fair opened with the return of Dignity Health - Mercy Medical Center's "We Care Wednesday" on Opening Day, June 7, which welcomed seniors 62 and better for free all evening long, plus featured a special Seniors' Lifestyle Expo. Also, during the Fair people were able to enjoy free rides to the fairgrounds from the Downtown Transpo Center and North Transit Hub thanks to a partnership with The Bus; a total of 479 passengers took advantage of this service.



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During the five days of the Fair, the Grandstand was busy with excitement! The Merced Speedway Auto Racing kicked it off with a free night of racing, then Thursday was something new with Go-Kart Racing (also a free show!), then it was a Fairgoer favorite Valley Tractor Pullers' Tractor Pull (6/9), Destruction Derby (6/10) and the Humpz & Hornz Jaripeo (6/11) to close out the Fair – all made possible thanks to sponsors Coors Light, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Save Mart and FoodMaxx. Fairgoers also enjoyed free live music and entertainment on the Coors Light Stage and the Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center Stage, not to mention packed shows in the Outdoor Theatre where an incredible array of musical acts played as part of the Free Outdoor Theatre Concert Series presented by Coors Light. The diverse line-up included George Michael Reborn (6/7), Smash Mouth (6/8), Lonestar (6/9), The Purple Madness – A Tribute to Prince (6/10) and Banda Machos (6/11).

Fairgoers also enjoyed thrilling carnival rides provided by Butler Amusements, which had 34 rides in total. Favorites were the stomach-turning Starship 3000 and Turbo rides, then of course the classic Fair-favorite Ferris wheel – and for the kids it was definitely the Rockin Tug and Puppy Roll rides. The Sunshine Lane Family Area was filled with families enjoying everything from the Pony Rides to the Petting Zoo, plus the popular Alaskan Racing Pigs sponsored by Valley Children's Healthcare and Joseph Farms.

For a second year in a row, the Merced County Fair partnered with Valley Children's Healthcare, the Merced County Library and First 5 Merced County on the **Early Childhood Literacy Partnership** whose mission is to empower children to read, as well as foster a love for reading. As part of this partnership, the Merced County Fair hosted the Library Bookmobile on Saturday, June 10 and Sunday, June 11, where free books were given to young Fairgoers and they could get their very own [Merced County Library](#) card. This partnership was a great success with 1,000 books donated by Valley Children's Healthcare handed out – all helping to encourage summer reading!

Food was most definitely a big topic at the Fair, featuring everything from Hot Doggin' Inc. with their bacon-wrapped gourmet hot dogs and Dole Whip with their refreshing sweet treats to Country Fair Cinnamon Rolls with their award-winning maple bacon bomb cinnamon roll and Pepe's Mariscos with fresh ceviche. Don't forget other Fair favorites like corn dogs, kettle corn, fresh lemonade, giant turkey legs and so much more!

As always, livestock draws in the crowds and big support from the community, which is evident in this year's record-breaking livestock numbers. The Small Animal Auction on Thursday, June 8 in the Les McCabe Arena saw the sale of 119 animals generating \$38,665 in sales. Then on Friday, June 9 in the Les McCabe Arena, the Dairy Replacement Heifer Sale generated \$231,100 from 64 heifers sold. Everything culminated on Saturday, June 10, with the Jr. Livestock Auction in the Hilmar Cheese Barn which was a big success generating \$988,135.50 in sales from 585 animals exhibited and sold by 4-H, FFA and Independent Exhibitors. That brought the total 2023 Merced County Fair Livestock Auction totals with add-ons to a record-setting \$1,429,095.14. The Merced County Fair Board of Directors served 650 dinners for the Jr. Livestock Auction buyers and their families in the Central Valley Concrete & Central Valley Trucking picnic area to show the Fair's appreciation for the buyers' continued support of the Fair's livestock program and the hardworking exhibitors.



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“We are so proud of our annual Merced County Fair – not only for the fun and entertainment it brings to our community, but its financial impact with jobs and revenue for local businesses, which is estimated to be \$23 million each year!” said Burrola. “We look forward to serving the community year-round and welcoming everyone back in 2024 to kick-off the summer with us!”

The 2024 Merced County Fair will run June 5 - 9. 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, Instagram and TikTok.

**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.*” Roughly 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, Kim Rogina; First Vice President, Vicky Banaga; Second Vice President, Luis Lara; Mark Erreca; Lori Gallo; Emily Haden; Mark N. Pazin; and Carol Sartori-Silva. Teresa Burrola heads up the daily operations in her role as CEO. The 2024 Merced County Fair, which marks 133<sup>rd</sup> year of operation for the Fair, will be June 5 - 9. For more information about the Merced County Fair, please visit [www.MercedCountyFair.com](http://www.MercedCountyFair.com). Connect with the Fair on Facebook ([@mercedfair](https://www.facebook.com/mercedfair)), Twitter ([@Merced\\_CA\\_Fair](https://twitter.com/Merced_CA_Fair)), Instagram ([@mercedcountyfair](https://www.instagram.com/mercedcountyfair)) and TikTok ([@mercedcountyfair](https://www.tiktok.com/@mercedcountyfair)).