



June 5-9, 2024
It's A Barnyard Mardi Gras
35th District Agricultural Association



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Merced County Fair Board Officers Selected for 2024

Luis Lara succeeds Vicky Banaga as the new President of the Fair Board

MERCED, CALIFORNIA, February 21, 2024 – The Merced County Fair is proud to announce the 2024 officer positions for the 35th District Agricultural Association Board of Directors, which was voted on at the December 20, 2024 Board meeting. Those positions are: Luis Lara, President; Mark Erreca, First Vice President; and Emily Haden, Second Vice President.

“Luis’ passion for our community and our youth is incredible,” said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair. “I’m excited to work alongside him as Board President and the rest of our Fair Board on this year’s Merced County Fair that will truly be a celebration of and for our community.”

Board President, Luis Lara of Atwater was first appointed to the Merced County Fair Board in 2019. He has served as a Sergeant for the California Highway Patrol since 2011. Prior to that, Lara held several different positions and locations within the California Highway Patrol since joining it in 1998. He has also served as an instructor at Merced Community College since 2013. Lara is Secretary-Treasurer for the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union Board of Directors. He previously served on the Merced County Spring Fair Board from 2013 to 2018 and as a Board Member of the McSwain Union Elementary School District.

“There is something so special about fairs, especially the Merced County Fair. It takes me back to my childhood, enjoying the Fair with my family and now, I’m enjoying the Fair with my own family – enjoying all those fair favorite attractions from Fair food to live music to carnival rides and of course, showing swine in our Hilmar Cheese Barn,” said Luis Lara, President of the Merced County Fair Board of Directors. “I am so incredibly proud to be part of the effort to bring this family-friendly event to our community – seeing our community come together in celebration.”

First Vice President, Mark Erreca of Los Banos was first appointed to the Merced County Fair Board in 2003. He is the Owner of Erreca Cattle Company and has been a realtor since 1994, currently with PMZ Real Estate. Mark is Chair of the Merced County Planning Commission and Past President of the California County Planning Commissioners’ Association. He is a Board Member of the Grassland Resource Conservation District.

Emily Haden, of Merced, has served on the Merced County Fair Board since 2012. She graduated from Merced High in 1999 and from Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin in 2003 with degrees in history and Spanish. Emily returned to California in 2005 and graduated with distinction from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, in Sacramento in 2009. Emily, a sixth-generation attorney, joined her father in practice in 2010. Her practice areas include business law, with a focus on contract negotiation, estate planning and probate, and real estate.



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Emily has served as president of the Merced County Bar Association, the Merced County Law Library and CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Merced County. She's also active on the Merced College Foundation.

Fair Highlights:

- **Merced County Fair Pre-Party** | If you haven't already, get your tickets for the Merced County Fair's Annual Pre-Party on February 23. Tickets are \$75 per person, which includes dinner and hosted bar. Guests will enjoy live entertainment, a silent and live auction, a 50/50 raffle, and of course your fair food favorites of corn dogs and kettle corn! Attendees must be 21 years old. Tickets are available for purchase online only at www.mercedcountyfair.com/pre-party.
- **Fell in Love at the Fair Contest** | The Merced County Fair wants to hear your stories of how you met and fell in love at the Fair. To enter the "Fell in Love at the Fair" contest, all you have to do is submit your Fair love story by March 15, 2024. Stories will be reviewed by a panel of judges and a grand prize winner will be selected, as well as runners-up. The grand prize is a Preferred Parking Pass and 10 Fair Admission tickets so you and your love can attend every day of the 2024 Merced County Fair! Get more details at www.mercedcountyfair.com/loveatthefair.
- **2024 Merced County Fair** | The 2024 Merced County Fair will kick off the summer, June 5-9. Be sure to check the website (www.MercedCountyFair.com), entertainment announcements and the Competitive Exhibits books will be posted soon.
- **Stay In The Know** | Want to be the first to know about concerts, new featured food items, admission discounts and more? Then sign up for our email newsletter at (www.mercedcountyfair.com/contact-us) or connect with us on our social media handles.

RESOURCES:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/receive/O8YZOXpWIB>

Board Photos and 2024 Merced County Fair Theme Logo

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 131st year of operation for the Merced County Fair. The Merced County Fair annually welcomes nearly 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, Luis Lara; First Vice President, Mark Erreca; Second Vice President, Emily Haden; Vicky Banaga; Lori Rossi Gallo; Mark N. Pazin; Kim Rogina; and Carol Sartori-Silva. Teresa Burrola heads up the daily operations in her role as CEO. The 2024 Merced County Fair will return to kick off the summer, June 5 -9. For more information about the Merced County Fair, please visit 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 Tik Tok ([@mercedcountyfair](https://www.tiktok.com/@mercedcountyfair)).

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