



June 5-9, 2019
Discover The Magic
35th District Agricultural Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE 2019 MERCED COUNTY FAIR BROUGHT THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR TRADITION, FUN AND EDUCATION DURING ITS FIVE DAY RUN

MERCED, CALIFORNIA – June 14, 2019: The Merced County Fair’s Board of Directors, Management and staff want to thank the community for coming out to support and “Discover the Magic” at the 2019 Merced County Fair, which ran June 5-9. During the fair’s five-day run, the community enjoyed delicious food, great entertainment, carnival rides, incredible exhibits and new free attractions like the Safari Adventure, Farmers Market and Discovering Science exhibit, plus so much more! The 2019 Merced County Fair unaudited attendance total during the five days was 64,536 people, a decrease of 10% from last year’s total of 71,201 people. Record heat on Opening Day and school graduations played a factor in the attendance decrease, but those who came out enjoyed their Merced County Fair to the fullest.

“We are so honored to once again host the biggest party in Merced County for our community,” said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair. “We not only entertained, but were able to educate our fairgoers with our various exhibits and attractions thanks to partners like UC Merced’s Mobile Makers Space, Kids Discovery Station, our F.A.C.T. program students and more. We are thankful for the continued community support and look forward to next year – which thankfully will not overlap with graduations!”

Affordability continued to be a big focus for Fair Management with plenty of early and Fair-time discounts. Prior to the Fair, people could save \$3 on Adult Admission and \$5 on Unlimited Carnival Ride Wristbands when purchased at participating Rancho San Miguel Markets and O’Reilly Auto Parts, which many from the community took advantage of. The savings continued as the Fair opened with the return of Mercy Medical Center’s “We Care Wednesday” presented by MERCOCredit Union that helped people save money and give back! On Wednesday, June 5 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; new this year, there was an opportunity to make your donations early at MERCOCredit Union’s Atwater and Merced branches. A total of 4,413 lbs. of food was collected, all of which was donated to the Merced County Food Bank to aid in their fight against hunger. This effort was supported by University Industrial Park and UC Merced. Additionally, opening day was Seniors’ Day where seniors 62 and better got into the Fair for free. Then Thursday, June 6 was Kids’ Day presented by Emanuel Medical Center, where kids 12 and under got into the Fair for free!

Another great service provided to Fairgoers by The Bus was the free rides to the Fair from all of the 26 stops in Merced area. A total of 513 passengers took advantage of these free rides to and from the Fair, and more than 10,392 free trips were taken system-wide during the “Free Fares to the Fair” promotion. Additionally, Fairgoers who used The Bus were able to buy discounted \$7 Fair admission tickets on their ride to the Fair!



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The 2019 Merced County Fair marked some momentous occasions including the unveiling and groundbreaking of the new 5,000 sq. ft. permanent shade structure near the Bear Creek Plaza Stage that will be known as the Central Valley Concrete & Central Valley Trucking Picnic Area. On June 5 at the Fair's Opening Ceremony festivities, Merced County Fair Board President Lori Gallo and CEO Teresa Burrola, joined Central Valley Concrete & Trucking Vice President Staci Leonardo and generations of the Neal family to unveil the rendering and break ground this new structure that will be completed by the 2020 Merced County Fair and available to not only fairgoers, but the community as a venue for year round events.

During the five days of the Fair, the Grandstand was busy with excitement, especially on opening night as the Merced Speedway Auto Racing brought back the IMCA Modifieds and IMCA Sport Mods for a free night of racing (6/5), new to the Fair this year was the Freestyle Moto X Tour (6/6), plus Valley Tractor Pullers' Tractor Pull (6/7), Humpz & Hornz "Bad to the Bone" Bull Riding (6/8) and the Gran Jaripeo (6/9) – all made possible thanks to sponsors Table Mountain Casino, Coors Light, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Rancho San Miguel and 51FIFTY. Fairgoers also enjoyed free live music and entertainment on the Coors Light Stage and 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 diverse line-up included James Garner's Tribute to Johnny Cash (6/5), Country Artists Tribute to Toby Keith, Kenny Chesney and Jason Aldean (6/6), Morris Day & The Time (6/7), Canaan Smith (6/8) and Gracie as Jenni Rivera Tribute (6/9).

Fairgoers also enjoyed thrilling carnival rides provided by Butler Amusements, which had 36 rides in total. Favorites were the stomach-turning Turbo and Vertigo rides, then of course the classic Fair-favorite Ferris wheel – and for the kids it was definitely the Wacky Worm rollercoaster and the Loli Swings. The Sunshine Lane Family Area was packed with Fairgoers enjoying everything from the Pony Rides to All-Alaskan Racing Pigs, plus the new "Farm to City" Farmer's Market presented by First 5 Merced County. Food was most definitely a big topic at the Fair which featured two new vendors – Rocket Dogs with their gourmet hot dogs and Fruitas Tropicales with their delicious fresh fruit cups – plus the return of Pepe's Mariscos! Then JP's Old Fashion Cinnamon Rolls debuted its Bacon Maple Cinnamon Rolls much to the delight of Fairgoers, plus there was a long list of returning Fair food favorites enjoyed by many!

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 Small Animal Auction on Friday, June 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hilmar Cheese Barn saw the sale of 108 animals generating \$22,915 in sales. Then that same day in the Les McCabe Arena, the Dairy Replacement Heifer Sale generated \$230,458 from 74 heifers sold. On Saturday, June 8, the Junior Livestock Auction sponsored by American Ag Credit, and held in the Hilmar Cheese Barn was a resounding success generating \$724,197 in sales by 4-H, FFA and Independent Exhibitors, a 9.8% increase over last year's record sales totals. A total of 617 goats, pigs, lambs and beef were sold this year. The Merced County Fair Board of Directors served 650 dinners for the Junior 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 4-H, FFA and Independent exhibitors.



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The Merced County Fair would also like to recognize these top buyers from 2018, who received the following awards at this year's Fair:

- Buyer of the Year Fat Stock Sale –Margie Mejia
- Buyer of the Year Dairy Heifer Replacement Sale – Mayo Dairy
- Buyer of the Year Small Animal Sale – Duke's Construction
- Outstanding Service Award Winner – James Howell, Hospitality Department
- WFA Blue Ribbon Award Winner – Jamie Farao (past Fair Board Member 2007-2015) and American Legion Post 83

More than 4,535 entries were received and displayed in three competitive exhibit display areas - Jr. Ag Mechanics and Ag Exhibits, presented by MID Water & Power, Floriculture and the Merced Arts Pavilion (Kids', Fine and Home Arts) - this does not include the 1,417 animals entered into the Livestock competitions. The Fair is pleased with the overall increase in entries, which provides the opportunity to showcase all of the talent and hard work of Merced County residents.

"We are incredibly proud of the quality of this year's Fair – providing a safe, affordable and family-friendly entertainment option for our community," said Burrola. "We want to thank everyone who came out to enjoy the Fair this year, as well as the wide array of people who played a role in helping our community 'Discover the Magic' of the Merced County Fair!"

The 2020 Merced County Fair will run June 10-14. 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 128 years of operation this year. More than 65,000 people from throughout Merced County and beyond attend the five-day Merced County Fair each June. Members of the Board of Directors include: President, Lori Gallo; First Vice President Carol Sartori-Silva; Second Vice President Lee Lor; Vicky Banaga; Mark Erreca; Emily Haden; Flip Hassett; and Kim Rogina. 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 on Instagram (@mercedcountyfair).