



2016 Lane County Fair Report



In an effort to provide feedback and information regarding the 2016 Lane County Fair this report is being collaboratively submitted by the Lane County Fair Staff. We would like to thank the Fair Board for their time, effort and involvement in helping produce a very successful Fair. We would also like to thank the many members of Public Works and Lane County employees who work behind the scenes to help produce this great event. This report is intended to provide information and data in the most accurate form in order to provide clarity and information for planning future Fairs.

The 2016 Lane County Fair started off strong and never slowed down! For the second year in a row we saw great weather and crowds that came early and stayed late. The decision to move the dates of the Fair to July four years ago has been a positive change not only for programming but we have seen fewer extreme weather fluctuations which had been impacting us in August. Great entertainment, fun family atmosphere, exhibits and animals all contributed to providing a great entertainment alternative to the many events scheduled in the community during July.

We believe that the current model of our Fair is helping drive increased numbers over time and for the third year in a row we have seen increased revenues in many areas. The Carnival and Food Vendors set a record high in gross sales and receipts to the Fair and we hope to improve upon those numbers even farther next year. A major change for the 2016 Fair was a partnership with the Lane County Sherriff's Mounted Posse who along with Search and Rescue provided parking services and charged for public parking. The partnership was successful for both entities with approximately \$50,000 raised in 5 days, which was split 50/50 between the organizations. This was a new revenue stream for the Fair while allowing money to funnel into programs like the Posse and Search and Rescue, which provides services throughout Lane County year round.

We are again extremely proud of the Fair that was planned and produced. Every member of our team worked exceptionally hard in the areas they are responsible for which contributed to the overall success. We are already working on the 2017 Fair and are looking forward to continuing the promotion of animals, youth, community and entertainment.

STAFF:

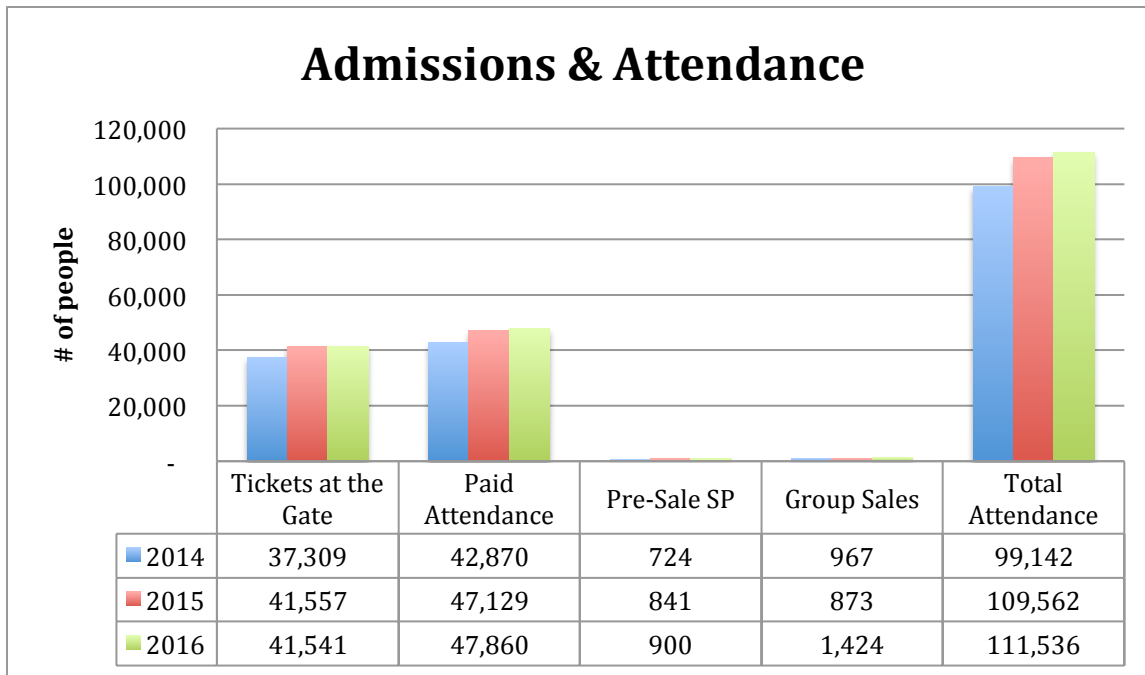
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Anali Silvius

FAIR BOARD:

Randy Thwing (President)
Sid Voorhees (Vice President)
Sascha Cosio
Jack Harris
Cliff Kelley

Admissions & Attendance

Attendance was great once again this year! 2016 marks the second year in a row in which we experienced an increase in overall attendance. Increases in attendance can be attributed to many factors but there is a strong sense that providing good, wholesome family entertainment, delicious food, a variety of vendors, a large carnival and great music choices will continue the upward trend in our attendance into the future.



NOTE: Paid attendance is derived from admissions sold at the gate, in the Fair office, pre-sale Season Passes achieved on and off site, group sales, admission included with the purchase of concert tickets. Total attendance is derived from the number of guests counted through the gates.

Parking

Over the past couple of years we began to introduce patrons to paid parking with our VIP lot to the North of the Livestock Building. This year, the Fair Board approved the Lane County Mounted Sheriff's Posse's proposal to make all parking at the Fair paid. The South lots were \$5 per car and the North lot remained at \$10 per car, as it has been the past couple of years. The revenues were split 50/50 between the Sheriff's Posse and the Fair. Revenue generated for the Fair from this year's parking was \$29,480, a 253% increase over last year's revenue of \$8,360. Additionally, this new arrangement decreased the Fair's overall expenses in the form of not having to pay for the services of the Sheriff's Posse. While this increase in revenue to the Fair was significant, meetings have already taken place with the Posse to discuss ways to better organize and streamline the process for next year.

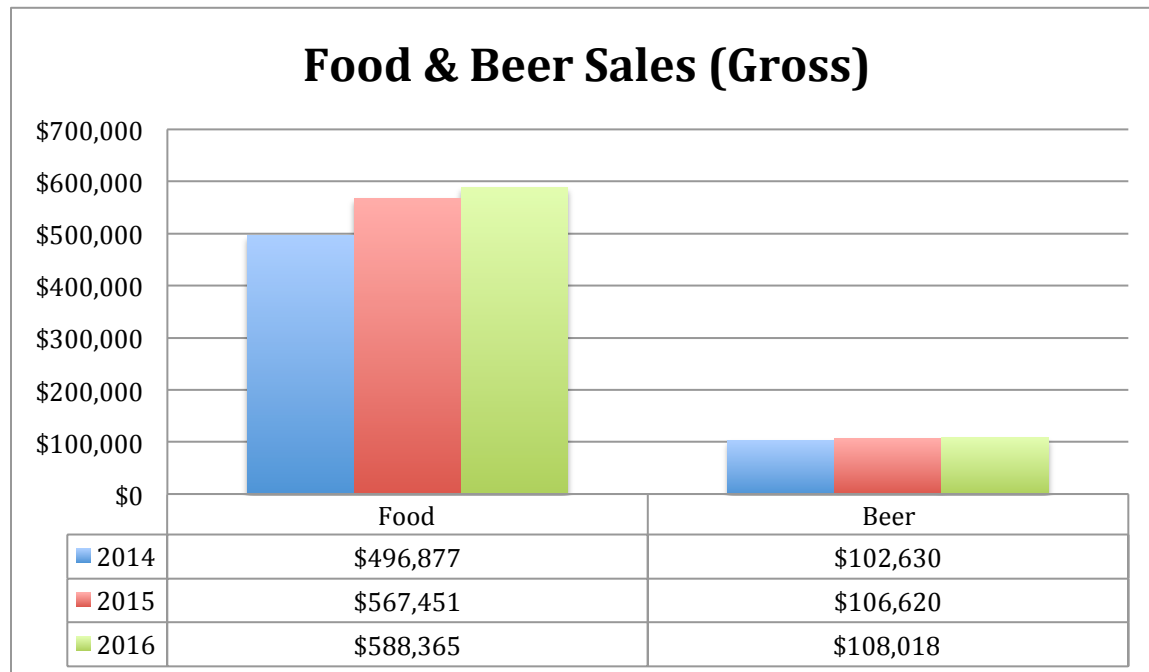
Additionally, the Posse will work towards better communicating to the public that the paid parking is in part a fundraiser for Posse and Search and Rescue, which unfortunately did not occur in the manner in which we hoped for 2016. Small adjustments and better communication may increase our revenues in 2017.

Vendors

Food & Beer

2016 was another great year for our food vendors! There isn't enough to be said about how great the weather was considering that people love to be outside during a great Lane County Summer. Fairgoers were able to eat everything from BBQ Chicken to Corn on the Cobb and Frozen Cheesecake on a stick to Elephant Ears. Our food vendors are the best around and they take great care of our fairgoers! Good food ties everything together for fairgoers to be able to have a great time at the Lane County Fair and we give them all the options they could hope for.

In September of this year, we entered into a new partnership with Oregon Beverage Service to provide exclusive alcohol service at Lane County Fair. With this new contractor we will be able to offer our patrons more choices both in product and locations. This includes building on the Main Stage VIP tent that we developed in 2016 to expand service to reserve ticket holders and create additional incentive to those undecided about purchasing tickets. Along with the ability to reimagine service for our patrons, this new contract includes a payment scale with higher percentages paid out to the Fair, which will result in higher returns on all Fair alcohol sales.



Commercial Vendors

Commercial vendor revenue continues to increase. This year we generated \$91,700 up from the past two years revenues of \$81,600, and \$79,350 respectively. This increase can be attributed to a handful of new vendors and returning vendors leasing more inside space. The total number of commercial vendors fluctuates based on the dates of other Fairs up and down the I-5 corridor such as the Washington County Fair and the Jackson County Fair. In 2015 our dates overlapped with both of those Fairs but did not overlap with Washington County this year. In 2017 there is great opportunity to route, as Jackson County Fair is the week before and the Washington County Fair is the week after. Not only do we anticipate keeping the new vendors gained in 2016 but anticipate attracting new vendors by creating an incentive with the Jackson County Fair for those vendors who book at both of our Fairs.

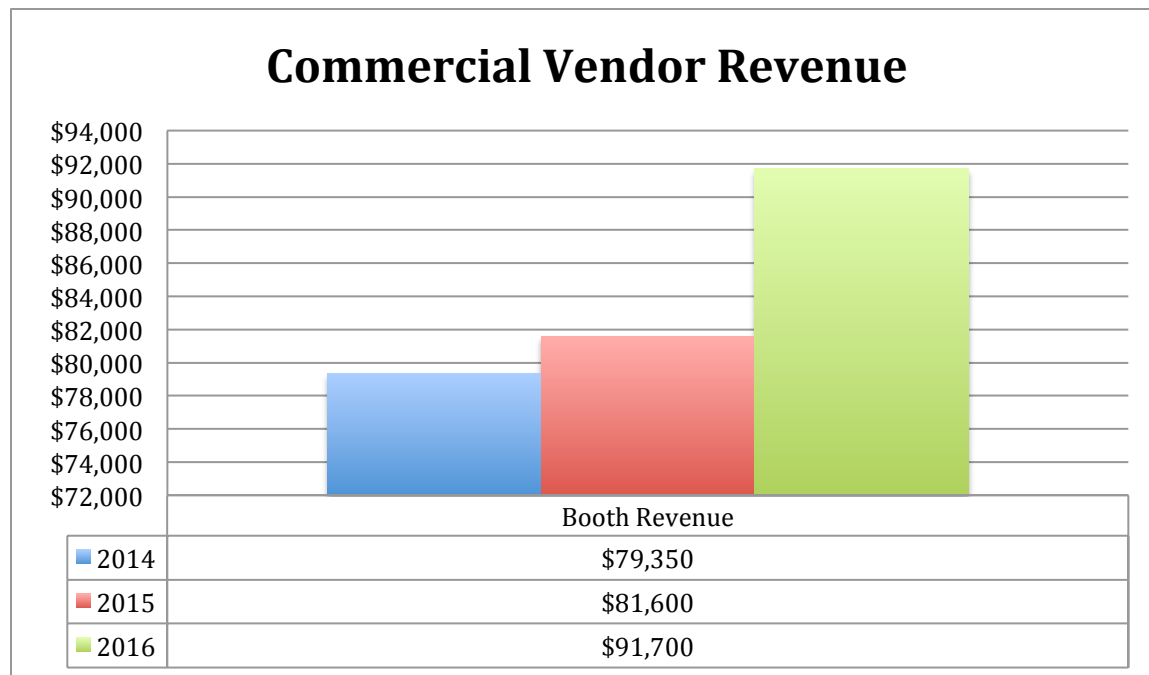
Outside vendors sales were fairly similar to 2015. Outside space sold out and we added a few additional spaces to accommodate last minute vendors. Each year the layout of the outside vendors changes based on the confirmed grounds entertainment and other fair activities. This year we tried something new with the layout in an effort to create new traffic patterns but feel it did not meet our expectations. Looking forward to 2017 we will reevaluate this area and how it integrates with the other activities in the surrounding areas.

Number of individual vendors (this does not reflect the number of spaces we have to sell as many vendors take more than one 10' x 10' booth):

2014: 89 Vendors

2015: 83 Vendors

2016: 88 Vendors

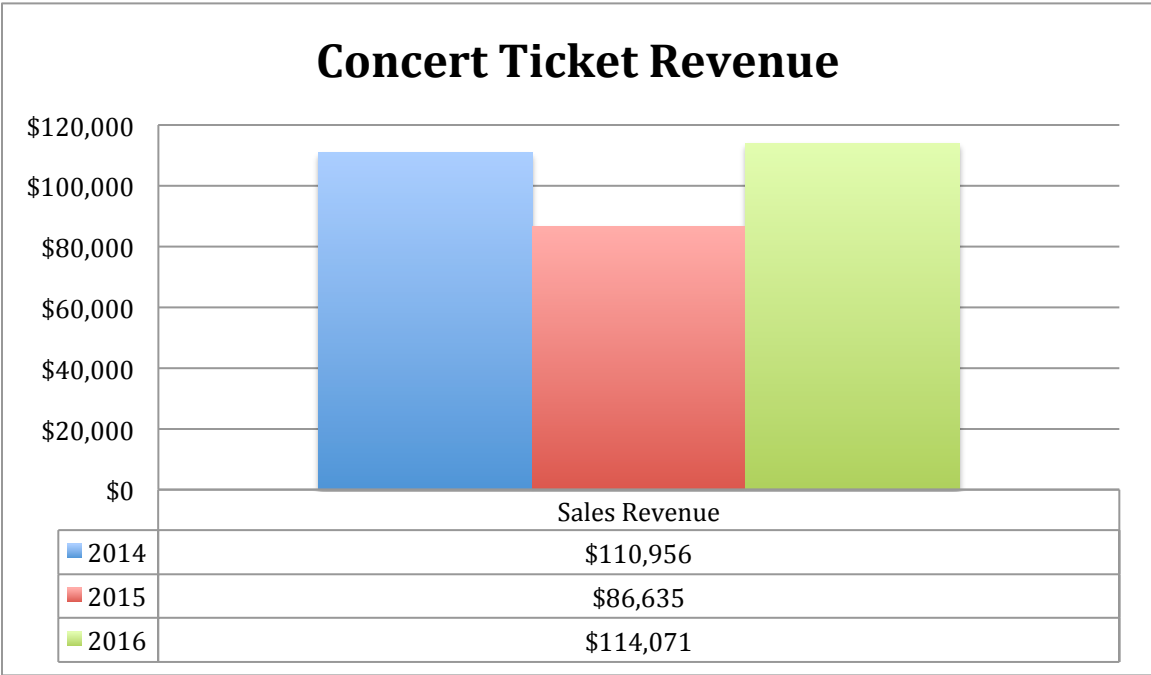


Entertainment

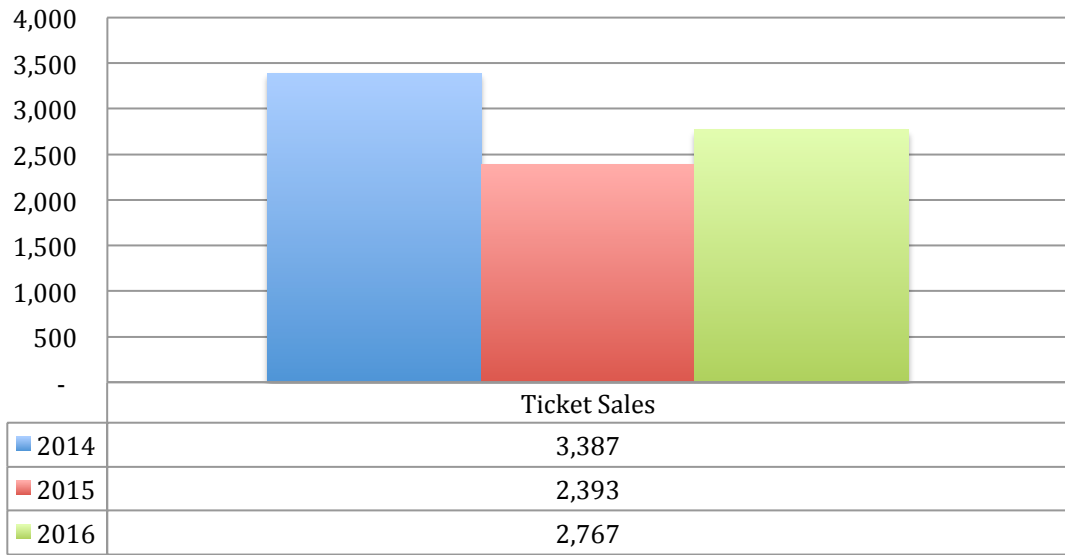
Main Stage Concerts

Ticket sales and revenue this year were up significantly over 2016! While the number of tickets sold increased by 15.6%, revenue increased by double that to almost 32%! This can be attributed to a number of factors; moving into 2016 we took a look at our ticketed seating area noting where the bulk majority of our tickets were being purchased and adjusted the sections to maximize revenues moving forward. The addition of the “choose your own seat” feature with our new ticketing company also seemed to have an impact, certainly with the satisfaction of our patrons!

The 2016 artist line up and accompanying price points had possibly the largest influence on these overall revenues. This year, the ticket price points for 4 of the 5 artists was at least \$10 more per ticket and with the increase in premium tickets over 2015 contributed significantly to such a large increase in revenue this year. As we look forward, we hope to select artists that will warrant these higher price points but it is rarely something we are able to know ahead of time. We do however consider the demographic of the audience that each artist attracts, previous sales at other venues as well the adjustments made to our seating areas as mentioned above to keep revenues at a satisfactory level.

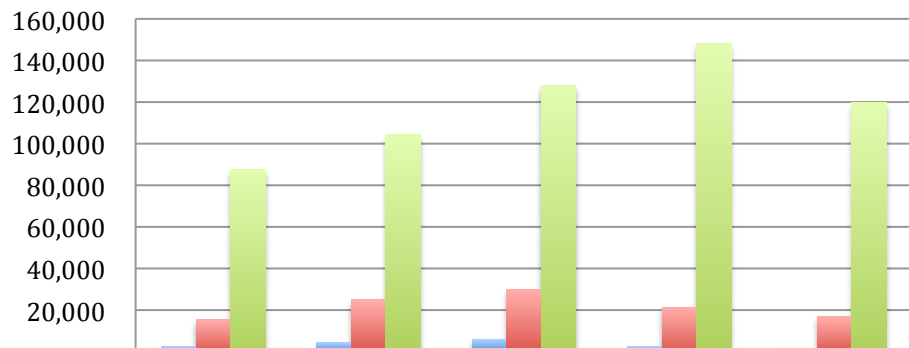


Concert Ticket Sales



<u>Date & Artist</u>	<u>Sold</u>	<u>Approx. Standing</u>	<u>Approx. Total</u>
Wed, July 20: Kansas	610	1800	2410
Thurs, July 21: Gary Allan	943	3500	4443
Fri, July 22: The B-52s	863	5000	5863
Sat, July 23: Rachel Platten	453	2000	2453
Sun, July 24: Joe Nichols	461	1000	1461

Artist, Food, Beer Correlation



Note: Food and beer sales in the above graph are for the full day of the Fair, not just the hours surrounding the concert.

Grounds Entertainment

The Grounds Entertainment this year boasted more individual entertainers than past years, offering even more variety and filling the grounds with more fun and activity. We brought back several entertainers who have not joined us in over 5 years, including Dr. Solar with his solar and energy magic show and Puppets & Players Little Theatre with handmade puppets acting out favorite fairytales! Speaking of fairytales, I Believe in Faeries joined us for the first time this year with their Dragon Scales & Faerie Tales stage show and their roving Enchanted Wagon that truly enchanted everyone who saw it. The Xpogo Stunt Team, along with one of their pro's straight out of Corvallis, came and wowed everyone with their exciting jumps and flips from their pogo-sticks. Every year we search for an entertainer to provide a free, safe, fun and relaxing area for babies, tiny tots and their parents. This year we brought back our favorite entertainer of this sort, Young Guns Fun Park along with their adorably fun Young Guns Rodeo Roundup and saw great success with both. We had more strolling entertainers this year than in the past and they brought the fun directly to our fair patrons, no matter where they were on the grounds!

This year, our Grounds Entertainment included:

All Alaskan Racing Pigs	Moogician
Children's Tractor Pull	Puppets & Players Little Theatre
Dr. Solar Energy Show	Steve Trash—Eco Magician
Fritter Critters	Washboard Willy's Jamboree
I Believe in Faeries	Xpogo Stunt Team
Karen Quest—Over the Top Stilts	Young Guns Fun Park
Matt Baker Comedy Magician	Young Guns Rodeo Roundup

For 2017, the goal is to bring back the entertainment the public loves, including comedy stage shows and fun strolling characters, while incorporating a new, larger attraction as a “wow” factor without reducing the feeling of nostalgia that coming to the fair induces.

Senior Social:

The Senior Dessert Social drew a large crowd this year! The event again took place in the Wheeler Pavilion and we feel this location is perfect for the social. We were fortunate enough to maintain our wonderful partnerships with Larsen's Fine Candies, Martin Luther King Education Center / Lane County Youth Services, and Willamalane Teen Camp who provided ice cream, cakes, and assistance with patrons respectively.

Though the liability insurance requirement continues to be a concern among potential vendors, we were able to fill all of the vendor spaces with fantastic groups! In addition to our great vendors, amazing music and entertainment was provided by Eugene Gleemen and groups recruited from our Community Stage lineup. This event is always fun and is enjoyed by many fairgoers! Long lines form well before the social begins and many remain until the doors close. Ice cream and cake tend to run out after the first hour or two, which is frustrating to some patrons, so we may want to consider publicizing desserts are first-come-first-serve, or possibly shortening the length of the event. Ultimately, we feel the Senior Social was an absolute success and we are excited to encourage its growth in 2017!

Community Areas: Discovery Park, STEM Festival

Discovery Park is designed to be a community-oriented area where organizations have the opportunity to promote their nonprofit or business. In exchange for booth space at the Fair, these groups provided free activities and engaging demonstrations for fairgoers. We offered flexible days and hours, which allowed participants to come for a single day or all five days. This year, we saw an increase in vendor participation. This year's groups included mini therapy donkeys, fencing, and the final round of the OSU nutrition education program's Iron Chef Contest.

The three-day S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Festival continued for its third year. Organizers from Lane ESD, University of Oregon, and Eugene Astronomical Society worked with Fair staff to provide a wide range of S.T.E.M.-based activities. All activities were free to fairgoers and were enjoyed by those who participated! Though we increased promotion for this area, we did not see a corresponding increase in participation.

When considering the flexibility and benefits offered in these areas, we are not seeing the level of interest from local organizations we would hope for. In research done by Fair staff, it was discovered that lack of available volunteers was the major factor that prevented groups from participating. We will be reevaluating the community areas and determining what can be changed in order to increase involvement from both vendors and fairgoers.

Community Stage:

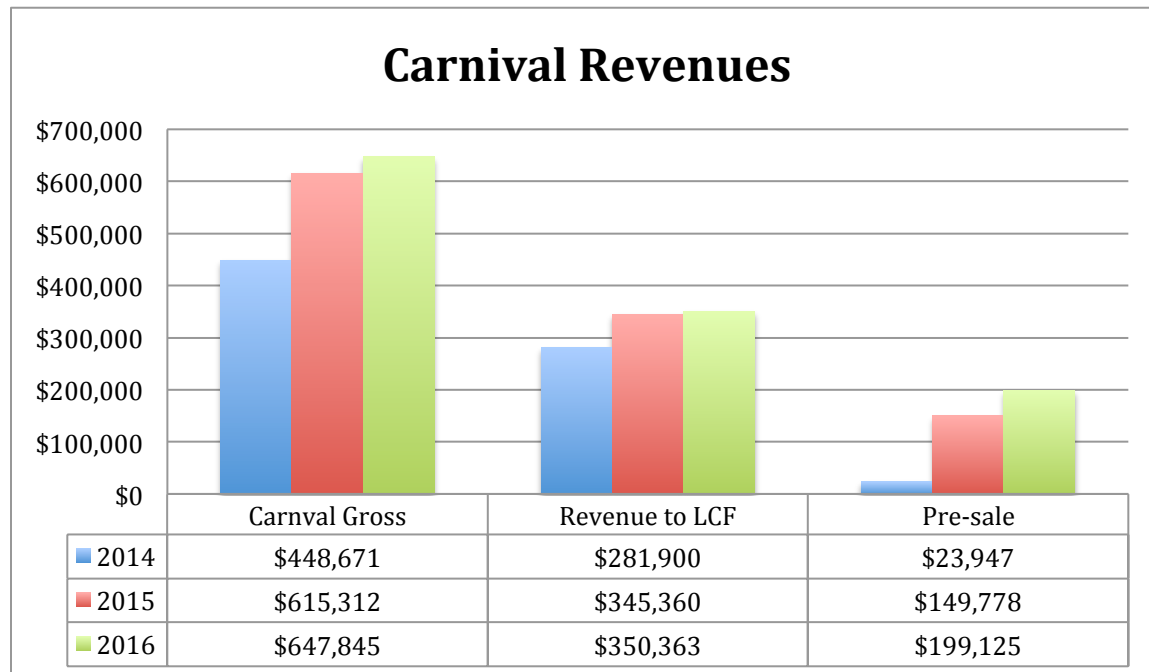
The Community Stage is a fun and entertaining part of the Fair every year! In 2015 this stage was located on the Convention Center lawn. This year it was moved to the lawn next to the Wheeler Pavilion near the Discovery Park and STEM Festival. By incorporating the stage into this area, we hoped that it would gain more exposure from being within eyesight of the Blue/C gate. The stage featured local musical performances as well as gymnastics, dance troupes and taekwondo groups. When scheduling, we aimed towards having the gymnastics and taekwondo groups perform earlier in the day while scheduling the musical groups later in the afternoon and evening as this is when they seem to be the best attended. There was one unique exception to this with a musical group that consisted of young performers who had participated in an eight weeklong musical education program. Their final step in this program was a live performance in the community. These groups performed earlier in the day to accommodate their families. The different types of performances, the large age range among acts, and the diverse genres of music offered a large variety of entertainment to Fair attendees.

In contrast to last year, the stage did not host any grounds entertainers as we dedicated it solely to community groups as interest in performing on this stage has increased over the past few years. Overall, the structure of the stage was secure, attractive and even improved over 2016. However as we move forward we will reconsider the positioning and location of the stage as we feel that the goal of attracting larger audiences each day was not met to our satisfaction. Also moving into 2017 we would like to continue to see more martial arts demonstrations, creative art performances, and science themed demonstrations increase to incorporate as many different aspects of the community as possible.

Carnival

Funtastic Carnival had another record-breaking year in 2016. Making the pay-one-price bracelets available every day of the Fair for the first time in 2015 resulted in a huge increase in sales. 2016 sales exceeded 2015's record-breaking year by another 5.3%! Last year these bracelets were sold in two ways, an on-line pre-sale and on-site at carnival ticket booths during the Fair. For 2016 Funtastic felt strongly that the Fair needed to add physical locations to the pre-sale (other than just the Fair Business Office). They are already partnered with Walgreens stores around the Northwest for carnival pre-sales at other events. Given this we opted give this arrangement a try for all carnival pre-sales including the pay-one-price bracelets and ride ticket packages.

The addition of these store locations increased the pre-sale by almost 30%! Unfortunately, the financial arrangement is not particularly favorable to the Fair and resulted in a less than 2% increase in overall revenues paid to the Fair by carnival this year. As it is clear that the physical sale location has a significant impact on the level of pre-sales, we will work to facilitate physical store locations for the pre-sale while also resulting in more equitable payout to the Fair as we move forward.



Exhibits: Creative and Livestock

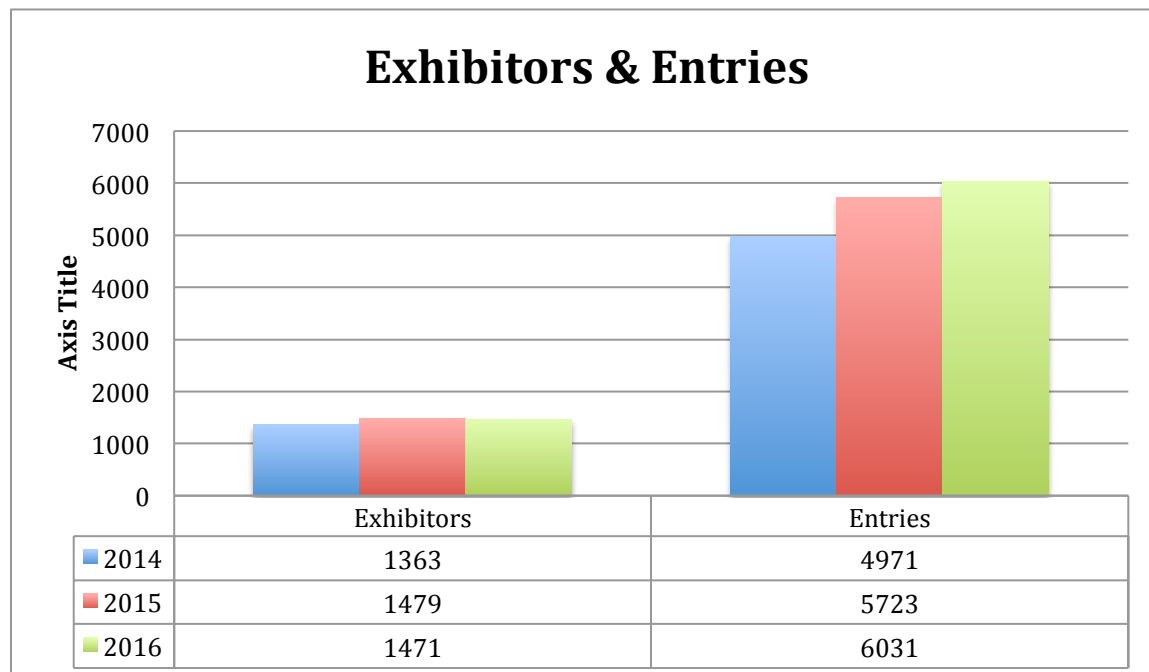
Overall 2016 was a great year for exhibits. We were fortunate to retain most of our Department Coordinators and staff as well as employing a handful of new additions. Thanks to one of our new coordinators, the Beer & Wine department saw entry numbers quadruple!

In addition to the upsurge in entries in the Beer & Wine department, we experienced significant growth in entries for Horses and for Youth Fair Swine. The total number of items entered into the Fair largely increased as well.

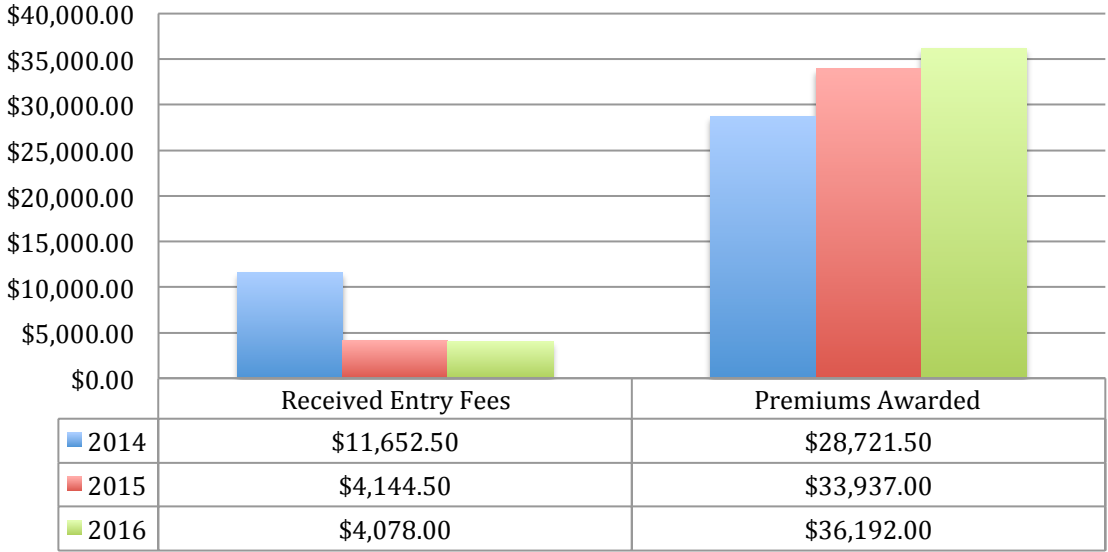
Financially, the exhibits department was able to stay close to budgeted amounts despite the increase in awards expenses due to the rise in entries. These costs were offset by decreases in labor and in judging expenses. Moving forward, we will continue creating efficiencies in staffing and pursuing volunteer options wherever possible.

Aside from minor logistical issues with parking and move in/out, exhibitors appreciated having the exhibitor entrance gate again this year. We will reevaluate parking and move in/out procedures before releasing information for next year.

4-H continued to manage all youth livestock, including non 4-H participants and all auction participants. This year, 4-H also oversaw the Youth Fair camping area which allowed for a more streamlined process. Increases in Youth Fair Swine lead to a shortage in livestock pens; fortunately, we were able to purchase additional pens before Fair and accept all entered animals in each department. We will continue working with 4-H, discussing how to overcome challenges that arose this year as well as their increased involvement as their program grows.



Exhibits Received vs. Paid Out

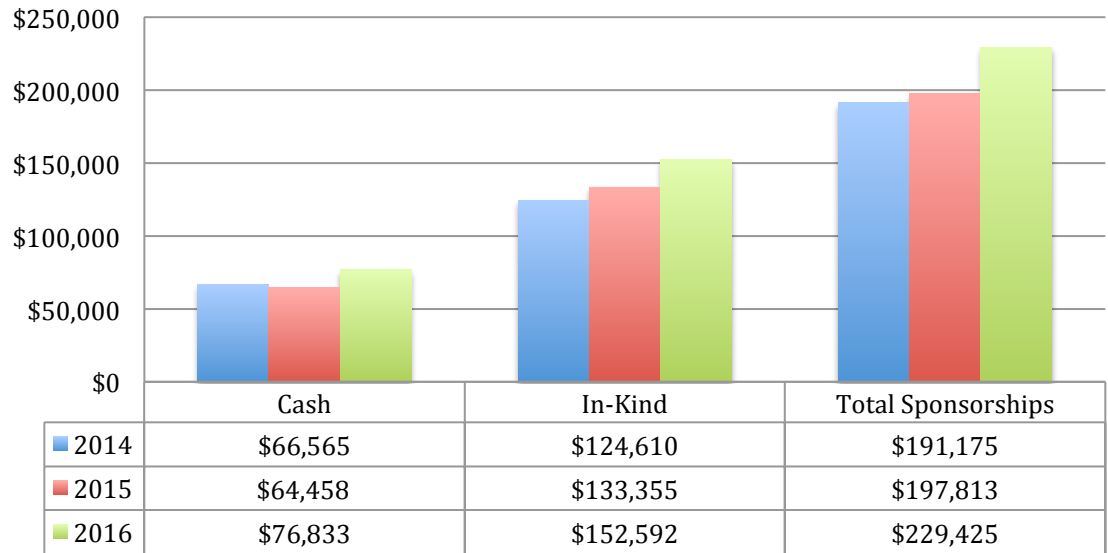


Sponsors & Partners

Sponsorships and partnerships increased significantly this year. Two new large partners joined the Fair this year, Nathan’s Famous Hot Dogs and NW Chevy Dealers. In addition to signing on for large sponsorships, these organizations brought with them two large areas of display and activity adding fun, color and activity to the grounds. Trade and in kind sponsorships also increased this year increasing the total value secured. These trade agreements increased our reach in the market exponentially and have proved to be exceptionally valuable in our marketing and advertising efforts.

Two of those current partnerships that continue to be successful are the Food for Lane County Food Drive on Sunday of the Fair and the Lane Blood Center/Bloodworks blood drive which takes place in the 8 weeks leading up to and including the Fair each year. This year we collected just shy of our usual 25,000 pounds of food in just a few short hours for Food for Lane County in a time of year when they desperately need it.

Sponsorships



Totals

Revenue: estimated \$1,290,775*

Expense: estimated \$1,038,268*

Net: estimated \$252,507*

**Current numbers are close approximations as several items are being held back for questioning and some revenues have not been received as of yet.*

In Summary

The 2016 Fair was a great success. For the 2nd year in a row the weather cooperated and we had a beautiful week in the mid 80's. Additionally careful planning and dedication of all of those involved resulted in a very successful year. As we look forward to 2017 we will continue to build on the successes of 2015 and 2016 while addressing the areas we felt left room for growth and improvement.



Randy Thwing, Fair Board President