

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR

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2020 WISCONSIN STATE FAIR CANCELED

WEST ALLIS, Wis. – May 28, 2020 – For several months the Wisconsin State Fair Park Board of Directors and staff have been working tirelessly analyzing all facets of the annual event, in hopes of being able to provide the Wisconsin State Fair experience that Fairgoers have come to know and love over the past 169 years.

On Tuesday, May 26, the board voted unanimously to authorize Chairman Yingling to make the determination on whether events currently scheduled at State Fair Park, including the 2020 Wisconsin State Fair, are to be canceled, after extensive input from each Board member and Kathleen O’Leary, Executive Director/CEO. Today Chairman Yingling announced that for the safety of fairgoers, staff, vendors, entertainers, exhibitors, sponsors, suppliers and the broader community, the 2020 Wisconsin State Fair has been canceled.

The board and staff have been closely monitoring COVID-19 data from local, state and federal health officials during this time. While some restrictions have recently been lifted and businesses are beginning to re-open, most are requiring strict safety measures, including social distancing, the wearing of masks and temperature checks. The evidence that this disease spreads quickly and easily when people are in densely populated areas has led several agencies to continue their recommendation to avoid mass gatherings.

Considering the Wisconsin State Fair is the largest event in the State of Wisconsin, drawing more than one million people over the course of 11 days, this weighed heavily into the decision to cancel the 2020 Wisconsin State Fair. The safety of all fairgoers and staff, as well as the above-mentioned partners who are so important to putting on a successful fair, has always been the number one top priority.

In addition, the magnitude of the financial implications associated with hosting a fair with significantly reduced attendance, as well as implementing the recommended mass gathering safety measures, could be detrimental to the future of State Fair Park. The State Fair Park Board has the responsibility to be stewards of the public funds entrusted to Wisconsin State Fair Park and ensure the financial viability of the Fair Park not only heading into 2021, but for years to come.

“On behalf of the entire State Fair Park Board of Directors, please know that the decision to cancel the 2020 Wisconsin State Fair was not taken lightly,” said Wisconsin State Fair Park Board Chairman John Yingling. “Months of deliberation took place, considering all options to host a Fair that adheres to the highest standard of safety without compromising the experience. We explored countless models, but ultimately safety cannot be compromised. The risks associated with hosting an event of this size and scope right now are just too great.”

As a State of Wisconsin agency, Chairman Yingling and the State Fair Park Board of Directors have been in communication with Governor Evers, as well as the Department of Administration, and have their support.

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“The Wisconsin State Fair is so much more than just a fair – it is a celebration of everything we are so proud of in Wisconsin,” said Kathleen O’Leary, CEO of Wisconsin State Fair Park. “We understand the magnitude of disappointment you may be feeling. We feel it too. However, safety is our top priority, and that cannot be compromised under any circumstance. We have tremendously loyal fairgoers, vendors, partners and exhibitors. For that we are forever grateful, and our greatest responsibility is to ensure that the fair remains strong and resilient for future generations.”

For those who have already purchased admission tickets during the annual holiday sales promotion, tickets will be valid for the 2021 Wisconsin State Fair. However, refunds are also available through June 30, 2020. Main Stage concert tickets are eligible for a full refund. Concert tickets purchased with a credit card will automatically be refunded to the card used for purchase. For more details, as well as answers to many other questions, please visit Wistatefair.com.

Moving forward, the board and staff will continue to analyze the data and prioritize the safety of all Fair Park visitors when making decisions about other events scheduled to be held at State Fair Park. The 2021 Wisconsin State Fair, presented by U.S. Cellular, is scheduled to take place August 5 – 15.

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