A meeting of the Board of State Fair Advisors was held on Thursday, June 5, 2014 commencing at 1:00 pm in Room 66 at the Illinois Department of Agriculture Building.

Advisory Board members present were:

In Person:

Director Robert Flider
Gary Joe Johnson
George Obernagel III
Gordon Stine
Larry Breon
Paul Johnson
Tibretta Reiman
Bob Lieb
Jobst Schulte Jr.
Meredith Jamison
Gary Joe Johnson
Bob Lieb
Jobst Schulte Jr.

Representative of the Governor’s Office:   Jerome Halston
Representatives of Senator David Koehler:   Mitchell Remmert; Russell Orrill and Mark Raney

Phone Participants:

Representative Donald Moffitt
Brian Oaks
Randy Prince
Jim Bohnsack
Andrew Glover

Others present:

Amy Bliefnick, Manager, Illinois State Fair
Dennis Morris, Special Events/Corporate Sponsorship, Illinois State Fair
Tammy Payne, Credentials/Campgrounds/Golf Cars, Illinois State Fair
Lori Kirby, Space Rental, Illinois State Fair
Carol Chapman, Competitive Events/Entry, Illinois State Fair
Kim Hart, Grandstand/Ticket Office, Illinois State Fair
Ray Watson, General Counsel, Illinois Department of Agriculture

Members absent:   Glen Bauman, Bob Kobylarz and Kelly Turner

Director Bob Flider called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. All attendees then introduced themselves and the meeting proceeded.

Board meeting minutes from December 2013 were reviewed with the editing of Meredith Johnson to Meredith Jamison and Gordon Stine’s attendance from absent to present. Bob Lieb motioned to approve the amended minutes and Gary Johnson second the motion.

State Fair Manager, Amy Bliefnick, then welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their support and hard work.

Director Flider noted that he is looking forward to the Illinois State Fair and DuQuoin State Fair in the upcoming months. Director shared that the fairs are maintaining revenue, and the Department of Agriculture is being supportive and attaining the same level of funding because people are starting to
recognize that agriculture is our most important industry. Governor Quinn is advocating for money for infrastructure on the fairgrounds.

Representative Don Moffitt agreed that agriculture is a huge success and a big part of our economy. He commended Director Flider and his staff for their hard work and for keeping agriculture in the forefront.

DuQuoin State Fair manager, Shannon Woodworth, exclaimed that this month’s Street Machine Nationals are said to be 20 - 25% larger than last year and hopefully bring 30-35,000 attendees. He also gave a brief synopsis of the upcoming 2014 DuQuoin State Fair:
- Theme is “Love A Fair”
- Discussed two special features for the premiere of the fair
- Seven major music artists coming to entertain including: Foreigner, Kenny Rogers, Travis Tritt, The John Henninger Band, 38 Special, Rodney Atkins, and KC and the Sunshine Band
- Wrestling will return and bring much attendance and revenue
- To wrap up the fair on the last day, will be the auto races as always
- Tickets do not go on sale until June 18, 2014
- Veteran’s Day changed to “True Veteran Days” providing free admission, parking, food and entertainment in the VIP Tent
- Announced that a choir group from DuQuoin High School will be singing back-up for Foreigner’s song “I Wanna Know What Love Is”

Andy Glover welcomed Shannon Woodworth to the State Fair team and claims that everything is looking good so far.

Tibretta Reiman informed Shannon that Trails to Adventure will once again purchase $10,000 in advertising. Shannon was very thankful and attributed the 20% increase in attendance due to advertising in the St. Louis area.

Illinois State Fair manager, Amy Bliefnick, briefly explains plans for the 2014 Illinois State Fair:
- Theme is “Making Memories”
- Major growth in income and attendance
- Economic impact is increasing
- Renovations done for Mega Pass to accommodate customers

Tammy Payne briefs attendees on credential, golf cars, and campground information:
- 2014 Mega Pass sales are on target to surpasses last year’s revenue of $430,000. To date, sales exceed same time last year by 442.
- Camping applications were accepted starting April 1, 2014 and campground was full that morning at 8:44 am
- 450 Campers placed, 90 on waiting list
- Credential requests being taken and will be filled mid-July
- Pilot program with Gate 2 accepting credit cards for admission this year – may expand to other gates if successful

Amy Bliefnick interjected with the comment that the fairgrounds needs more space for parking since attendance is growing and that some vendors have been moved to the newly created camping area near the carnival freeing up space for livestock exhibitors. She also stated the changes in golf car regulations on the fairgrounds worked well with few complaints.
Dennis Morris then spoke on Special Events and Corporate Sponsorships
- Had $300,000 on corporate sponsors last year
- Shared the idea of mobile tours with Five-Hour Energy for the last four days of the fair
- A couple of sponsors pay and present cross marketing representation
- Farmer’s Little Helper is still popular
- Working on making the parade shorter and mostly a float parade with few walking groups
- Chili cookoff red chili winner won world competition and green chili winner came in second place.

Lori Kirby provided information on space rental:
- Most vendors are returning (93% of food vendors & 88% of commercial vendors)
- Having a hard time getting new and different foods
- Introduction of food vendors offering horseshoe pocket, quarter pound bacon on a stick, and chicken & noodles, along with commercial vendors offering outdoor kitchens, a sportsman outlet, shed and barn sliding door automation system, and hanging plastic bin storage system

Amy Bliefnick announced that ISF is partnering with the State Journal Register on a “new food” contest to attract newer and more creative offerings to fair goers.

Kim Hart then spoke on behalf of the grandstand acts:
- Final act, Robin Thicke, announced
- Florida Georgia Line with biggest sales at 12,300 while the grandstand holds 13,500
- All other acts, to date, are between 2500-3000 in sales

Amy Bliefnick shares that harness racing will continue to be at the Illinois State Fair along with truck and tractor pulls, the demolition derby, and boat races.

Director Flider interjects applauding Amy and her staff for doing a great job with concerts and breaking records over the years.

Amy Bliefnick proclaims that the Million Dollar Quartet will return for a free show at the fair.

Carol Chapman states plans for competitive events:
- Premium books are on-line
- Ready for entries
- Junior horse show deadline was changed from June 10, 2014 to June 1, 2014, so all entries are in
- Society horse show added an Arabian horse show
- Added a mounted shooting competition to replace team roping

Director Flider mentioned a situation that happened last year where a champion was tested positive. He said with the assistance of Amy and legal staff, he believes the right decision was made. Amy said a ban will be in effect for 2015 and will be address at the December meeting.
Ray Watson, General Counsel, intercedes with conversation on ethics and passed around ethics statements to have signed and returned to Amy.

Amy Bliefnick goes over the Operations Plan of 2014 because of an audit finding last year. She also mentions that the Twilight Ballroom was torn down and will be replaced in 2015. A tent will reside there instead for this year.

Director Flider added that the creation of a foundation would allow major donors to put private dollars to the fairgrounds. A bill proposed to create a new foundation was passed in the Senate and is pending in the House.

Director Flider informed the members that there was a nice editorial about Amy in the SJR and will share a copy with all members.

State Fair manager Amy Bliefnick then thanked everyone for attending and asked for a motion to adjourn.

    Jobst Schulte Jr. motioned to adjourn
    Gordon Stine seconded the motion
    The motion unanimously carried

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 pm.