

FAIR, IOWA STATE

J.D. Taylor, secretary/manager; Iowa State Fairgrounds, East 30th and Grand Avenue, Des Moines 50319; 515-262-3111

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Information on the Iowa State Fair

Every August hundreds of thousands of people from all over the Midwest flock to the Iowa State Fair, the state's great celebration, a salute to Iowa's best in agriculture, industry, entertainment and achievement.

The fair is the home of a 20-acre farm machinery show, and the largest art show in the state. More than 600 exhibitors and concessionaires offer modern merchandise and quality foods. Large 4-H and VoAg/FFA shows provide excellent educational opportunity for youngsters. Five stages of free entertainment are featured every day. The grandstand offers superstar stage shows and track events. History comes alive in Heritage Village, a tribute to Iowa's hardy pioneers.

The Iowa State Fair is one of the oldest agricultural and industrial expositions in the nation. The first was held in Fairfield, Iowa, in 1854, on a six-acre tract. An outgrowth of one of Iowa's early county fairs, the State Fair was managed by the Iowa Agricultural Society. Next year's fair was also held in Fairfield. From 1856 to 1879, the fair moved from city to city: Muscatine, 1856-57; Oskaloosa, 1858-59; Iowa City, 1860-61; Dubuque, 1862-63; Burlington, 1864-66; Clinton 1867-68; Keokuk, 1869-70 and 1874-75; Cedar Rapids, 1871-73 and 1876-78.

In 1879, the fair moved to Des Moines to stay. In 1884, the Iowa Legislature appropriated \$50,000 for the purchase of grounds in Des Moines on condition that the city raise an equal sum for site improvements. The present 400-acre site was dedicated two years later. The Iowa Fair was the inspiration for the novel and motion pictures, "State Fair".

A separate fair board was created in 1923, consisting of the governor, the secretary of agriculture, the president of Iowa State University, one director from each congressional district and three directors-at-large. Official delegates, representing Iowa's 103 county fairs and other agricultural associations, elect these directors at the annual State Agricultural Convention in December. The president and vice president of the fair board are elected by the board from elected directors. The board also selects the secretary and the treasurer.

Operating expenses are paid for from revenue generated by the fair; special legislative appropriations are used for capital improvements and repair. The fairgrounds are used year round as a meeting and exposition center, featuring such events as large trade and machinery shows; sports events; national livestock, horse and dog shows; arts and crafts exhibitions; private gatherings; auto races; concerts and a wide variety of other activities.