



Heartland Association Messenger

Convention Summary

On November 21-23, the Dakota Fairs & Celebrations Convention was held in Aberdeen, SD at the Best Western Ramkota. The theme for this year's convention was "Looking Beyond" which was fitting for the task at hand to be decided at the convention and it also tied in to the key note speakers topic which was "Seeing Straight in a Cross-eyed World" presented by Gary Berg from Minnesota.

Approximately 140 attendees took part in the 12 different educational programs and 6 varied round tables, watched 15 Showcases of varied entertainment, visited 18 trade show booths and socialized amongst the 3 hospitality rooms which offered a variety of beverages and treats.

Fun, socializing, good food, great educational topics kept everyone busy throughout the entire 3 days. The silent and live auction brought in a wide selection of items and was a great fundraising tool for the Association.

A new attraction was the addition of the Best of Show Contest where events & festivals were welcome to bring in items that were unique and they were proud of from their events. The thought that it was another learning opportunity between events. The idea was taken from Tennessee's Association and was well received. *(continued on page 3)*



Welcome to the new Heartland Association!

History was made at the recent Dakota Fairs and Celebrations when the North and South Dakota Associations voted to merge and form the new **Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals and Events**.

Plans for the merger started over two years ago, when leaders in the two organizations realized the fair and event industries in the two states as well as adjoining states would be better served with one strong, central association, rather than two weaker ones. Member fairs and events in the Dakotas apparently felt the same way, as the merger vote was passed unanimously at the convention, which was held at the Ramkota Hotel in Aberdeen on Nov. 21-23.

By the end of the convention, a new board of directors had been elected, a new name for the organization was decided upon a work was underway in a number of other areas, such as developing a new website, designing a new logo, which is proudly displayed in the banner of this newsletter, and refining new rules and regulations for the new group to conduct business under.

The Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals and Events is made up of eight districts, with a member of a fair, festival or event serving as a directors from each district. In addition there are three board members elected to represent the associate members and an executive secretary/ treasurer.

On the inside of this newsletter there will be a list of the board members, a message from our president, Corey Heiser, news about a new website and other pertinent information about this new organization.

As with any new organization, there is sure to be a few bumps in the road during the startup time. But in the long run, the fairs, festivals and events in the region, as well as our associate members will be better served by this new association. And the general population in the region will also benefit from the new Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals and Events.

It was a long drive to get to where we are now, but it certainly was worth the trip!

**Welcome
Heartland Association**

Heartland Association

Meet the Heartland Association Board of Directors

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Email: corey@fargo-games-galore.com	Cell: 701-361-1331	
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<u>Temporary Co-Secretaries</u>		
Georgia Smith (SD)		
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Dale Hildebrant (ND)		
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Mark the Convention Date.....

November 18-20 at the Grand International Hotel in Minot, North Dakota!

Volume I, Issue I

From the President -

Greetings to all my fellow Fair, Festival, Event and Associate Friends!

It is still hard for me to believe, but this letter is being written as the Heartland Association FFE's President in the inaugural newsletter. I think now is the perfect time to thank all the dedicated and passionate people that made this happen. I am beyond excited for you all to see the progress that our current board of directors has made as well. There are some extremely talented and hardworking individuals on this board. We have a lot of work in front of us, but I am confident you have all voted the correct people into these positions. As you can see, the new logo has been selected and a brand-new website is up and running. Please take a look at <https://www.heartlandassociationffe.com/> Feel free to share any feedback with myself or anyone on the board.



But before I get too far along, thank you to the former South Dakota Association for putting together a fantastic convention in Aberdeen this past November. The entire convention seemed to be a celebration of the years of heritage, along with the continued learning to improve our events. At no time did it have the feeling of any ending, rather the celebration of a new beginning.

I am also pleased to also announce that the 2021 convention will be going back to Aberdeen. I can assure you, the heritage that this organization has come from, will not be forgotten.

It would be hard to put out this letter without addressing the current Covid 19 pandemic. This is some extremely challenging and uncharted times for all us. Especially, in this industry that we all know and love. While there are no black and white answers to address everyone's unique situation, there are many tools and resources out there to help. We have provided some links on the website to help direct you to these tools.

Convention summary from page 1...

Aside from a normal convention activity, this convention had business side at hand to finalize almost 24 months of discussion and planning that would determine if the North Dakota and South Dakota Association of Fairs would merge into one group. The attendees were presented proposed bylaws and new district map combining the 2 states.

Attendees from the various fairs and events, had chosen one delegate to vote on behalf of their organization. Following the presentation, a roll call and ballot vote was taken. It was unanimous that the two shall become one. With that, came the task of choosing district representatives. The two original Associations met and dissolved. The new board met to begin the task of electing officers, organizing the new Association and choosing a name.

In the meantime, Dale Hildebrant (originally from the ND Association of Fairs) and Georgia Smith (originally from the SD Association of Fairs & Celebrations) will be co-Executive Secretaries until the new Executive Secretary has been selected. The name of the new Association is ***Heartland Fairs, Festivals and Events***. It was important that the name didn't place boundaries on the new Association or any event who may want to join from neighboring states or provinces.

Overall, we were very proud of the 2019 convention.

Submitted by Georgia Smith, Secretary of the former SD Association of Fairs & Celebrations.

Sponsorships...By Holly Kennedy

Most of us just groan at the thought of getting them, asking for them, negotiating for them. With the new challenges brought on by the virus, fairs will be facing the reality that those depended on will not be able to meet the sponsorship levels that they have in years past. This is especially true for restaurants, bars, hospitals and most any of the local businesses that have supported the fairs for a very long time. Now more than ever we, as a fair association need to work together and step up as a group to assure our fairs get the sponsorship dollars needed to create the magic that is a fair. We need to think outside of our normal practices to ensure that the fairs all around the region are able to create a fair for their communities. This is a call to arms.

Up until now the associates have, for the most part, stayed out of the sponsorship dollars game. Here and there we might have a special sponsor for some part of our entertainment. Usually, those dollars are procured far in advance and are set in stone by January or February. I know those sponsorships are dear to us. We pet them, love them, hug them and treat them as ours. This year we need to share all that we have, even those coveted sponsorships.

As associate members, It is time for us to reach out to fair communities that we are perhaps not even working with this particular year and suggest those sponsors give dollars to the fairs. We all have connections. Let's use them. That brother in law, high school friend, retired friend of your parents, family member all those that live in these small communities.....reach out to them. THIS IS IMPORTANT communicate with the fairboards, remember they might already be wooing one of your connections for a donation. We need to be diligent not to step into a negotiation that is already in progress. Support these fairboards so that everyone can have the best fair possible. Most of the associate members have worked the fairs that are part of HAFPE a few times and in some cases many years running. We often know the communities and the fair boards quite well and have a bit of an understanding of how that particular fair does things. Use these very special relationships that we have all honed through the years. Communicate, communicate, communicate.



In the news...

Brian Carlson was named a Heritage Award winner at the an convention of the International Association of Fairs & Expositions.

Carlson's involvement with the fair began when he was nine years old and participating in 4-H activities. Following college, he returned to serve as an Itasca County Fair director for 10 years. He was reelected to the board in 2015 and currently serves as vice president. He has served as the fair's funding director since 1977 and frequently serves as a media contact and representative of the fair at local meetings of the Rotary, Optimists, and Kiwanis clubs. Carlson wrote a book on the fair titled Itasca County: Its fair, agricultural association, and agriculture.

In addition to his service to the Itasca County Fair, Carlson has served both the Minnesota Federation of County Fairs (MFCF) and the North Dakota Association of Fairs (NDAF). He currently serves as the MFCF District 8 Director and served as the NDAF President-Elect in 2009 and President in 2010. And after nearly 60 years in the fair industry, Carlson is still learning by currently being enrolled in the IAFE Institute of Fair Management.

HAFFE Youth Talent Contest & Finals

By Georgia Smith—Co-Executive Secretary

If you could do more at your event to encourage youth, draw in more guests, and promote your event in a different way; would you? Holding a youth talent contest at your event is one such way. The winner of your event goes on to compete at the Finals where the 1st place winner competes for cash and trophy.

Let me explain if you are unfamiliar with this event and how it works. The SD Association of Fairs sponsored this event annually and several associates would generously donate prizes. Last year, SDAFC agreed to expand it to 2 Divisions: Teen (13-18 years old) and Junior (7-12 years old). Local events who held talent contests, *sanctioned* their event. (All that means is they would complete a form which told me they were having a contest, when, where and contact information of the person in charge. This allowed me to direct youth who wanted to participate in talent contests to the event closest to them and who to contact. I would then send that event and their contact person information and forms for them and their contestants.) The state finals were held on Labor Day at the SD State Fair who provided stage, sound and t-shirts to the contestants as well as gate passes. My job with this contest is to find sponsors for the prizes, get judges for the Finals, work with local contests contact person, schedule practice times for contestants and send appropriate information to them in a timely manner, design & print programs, find a helper for timing and other duties as needed as well as the MC the event.

One thing that make this contest so valuable to those who participate is the feedback they receive. After a morning practice round where they can get use to the stage, get sound set and have their act timed, we go through the judges form which tells them the criteria the judges are using to evaluate their performance. This helps them critique their own performance. Then, following the afternoon performance, contestants meet with the judges for feedback. This is invaluable! The contestants come away knowing what they did right and what they can do to better themselves.

The HAFFE board has agreed to continue the talent contest. In 2020, the HAFFE Youth Talent Contest is open and available to any HAFFE member event. There will still be the 2 divisions. The contestants do not have to be residents of North or South Dakota. In 2020, the HAFEE Finals will be held in Huron on Labor Day. There are thoughts of having the final contest to be held at Convention in following years.

With the COVID outbreak creating uncertainty with many events this spring and summer, a lot of creative ideas are circulating such as virtual events or E-Fairs. You can still provide talent contests by asking those interested in competing to submit/upload videos of their performances. And have your committee or community to get involved and judge. Winners can participate at the SD State Fair on Labor Day.

What would you give for awards? It can be anything from cash to passes to concerts or a free day's ride pass or a trophy; whatever you want. Do you think hosting a talent contest is extra work for your volunteers? If you feel you don't have the manpower to add another event, maybe there is another group in your community who would like to run the event and take over that duty for your event. Perhaps your schools with their online classes would be willing to help you spread the word of this. Promote your event in a different way by letting people know of something different that you are doing as an added event within your event. Family and friends of contestants come out to watch their youth participate in these events and tell others to come and watch as well which brings in more guests to your event. It's a win-win for all involved!

I hope that you will add a youth contest to your local event. The youth who participate really appreciate the experience and mentoring they receive to help them become better prepared for future endeavors.

In the news...

Cody Cashman is the new general manager of the Red River Valley Fair in West Fargo. Cashman, a native of Taneytown, Maryland, has served as the Director of Business Development at the York State Fair and York Expo Center in York, Pennsylvania since 2014.

Check out the Heartland Association website!!

By Candi Briley

One of the great things the Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals and Events is working on is a new website! The web address is heartlandassociationffe.com. It is vibrant and fresh!

The website will offer many benefits, but one of them will be the member directory! The members' area is a great opportunity to network with other member fairs and associates. Every association member will have their own page, listing details about their fair or business, contact information, and links to social media and/or a website. If you have not been contacted about information for the website or if you have and haven't sent the information in, please email candi.briley@state.sd.us.

The convention will also be highlighted on the website. We hope to be able to offer online registration as the convention draws nearer. The schedule will also be posted. Currently, the convention page asks for members to send in their ideas for the upcoming convention in November.

A highlight of the convention is always recognizing those who have went above and beyond through awards. The various award nomination forms are available on the website.

There is much history behind our association so the 'About HAFPE' focuses on that and provides an overview of how we got to where we are today.

Take a minute to check out the new website – heartlandassociationffe.com! You can also find the association on Facebook by searching for Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals and Events.

We remember our heritage and look to the future

By Dale Hildebrant-co-executive secretary

A question on the minds of many is will we honor those who have previously won awards in the North Dakota and South Dakota Associations...and the answer is YES! The Fair/Event Persons of the Year, Hall of Fame Winners and Associates of the Year from both organizations will be listed on the new Heartland Association website. These individuals played an important role to where we have advanced today!

But now is the time to pay tribute to those who have worked to move forward to the Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals & Events. Which means now is the time to start submitting names for the various awards so they can be recognized at the annual convention in Minot this fall. Each of the districts will select a District Fair/Event Person of the Year with the overall winner selected from the district winners, as well as Hall of Fame and Associates of the Year winners.

Please feel free to submit names of the various categories to your district's board member (they are listed on page two of this newsletter).