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### **THE BIG FRESNO FAIR SELECTED AS WESTERN FAIRS ASSOCIATION'S 2009 FEATURE FAIR**

*The first California fair to be showcased for its innovative programs and vision*

**FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, February 4, 2009...**The Big Fresno Fair received some outstanding news at the 86th Annual Western Fairs Association (WFA) Conference, which was held in Reno, Nevada, January 25th – 28th. In addition to the 15 awards the Fair received at the conference, it was also announced that The Big Fresno Fair will be the 2009 feature fair. This selection, which is made annually by the WFA president, marks the first time that a California fair has been selected as the feature fair tour and given the opportunity to showcase, first-hand, its innovative programs and vision to its peers within the industry. The Feature Fair Tour will be open to WFA's membership, which includes 138 fairs and festivals located in 11 states.

“As incoming president of WFA, I was excited and honored to select The Big Fresno Fair as the 2009 feature fair tour,” said Jon Baker, CEO of the Pima County Fair, Arizona. “I have had the opportunity to visit several of the most recent feature fairs, from Canada to Mexico, and The Big Fresno Fair promises to be one of the very best. Attendees will experience the quality leadership, creativity and innovation that has catapulted The Big Fresno Fair into the rankings as one of the Top 50 fairs in the United States.”

As the feature fair, The Big Fresno Fair will welcome representatives from fairs and festivals throughout the Western United States at the special tour of the 2009 Big Fresno Fair, which runs October 7th -18th. The Big Fresno Fair Management Team is already planning an ultimate “behind the scenes” experience for these attendees. The experience will include a complete grounds tour; opportunities to learn about how the horse racing meet is operated, elements of the Clean & Green Program, history and accomplishments of Friends of the Fair, how the Fair educates patrons on the value and importance

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of agriculture, working alongside the Fresno County Farm Bureau; and a look at the unique and mutually beneficial relationship the Fair has with its local media. The Big Fresno Fair will also be looking to State and local officials for their collaboration on this tour as a great opportunity to highlight the best of Fresno County.

“Over the last five years, The Big Fresno Fair has won a significant number of awards for its creativity and vision,” said Stephen Chambers, Executive Director of Western Fairs Association. “Industry leaders have taken notice of this and as a result, The Big Fresno Fair was selected to be the first California feature fair. I’ve visited The Big Fresno Fair each year and know that our WFA representatives are going to truly enjoy experiencing the Fair first-hand and seeing these innovative programs and features in action.”

Past fairs that have been selected include: New Mexico State Fair; Indiana State Fair; Fiesta Del Sol in Mexicali, Mexico; Minnesota State Fair; and the Calgary Stampede in Alberta, Canada.

“Being selected as the featured fair is truly a great honor,” said Alkire. “We are excited to have the opportunity to not only share our experiences and programs with our peers in the industry, but show them the immense changes that our Fair has undergone in the last decade and our vision for the future.”

The Big Fresno Fair, founded in 1884, is the fifth largest fair in the State of California and represents the 21<sup>st</sup> District Agricultural Association. Nearly 550,000 people from throughout the state visit The Big Fresno Fair each year, making it the largest event in the Central Valley. Members of the Board of Directors include: Larry Serpa, President; Tim Bakman, Vice President; Joseph De Los Santos, Secretary/Treasurer; Ardie Der Manouel, Elizabeth Hudson, Debbie Jacobsen, Vernon Jones, Wangyee Vang and William White. John C. Alkire heads daily operations in his role as Chief Executive Officer. For additional information about The Big Fresno Fair go to

[www.FresnoFair.com](http://www.FresnoFair.com).

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