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## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### THE ALAMEDA COUNTY FAIR RECOGNIZED WITH INDUSTRY'S TOP AWARD

**PLEASANTON, CA – February 4, 2009** – The coveted Western Fair Association's (WFA) Louis B. Merrill Award, named for the WFA's founder, was awarded to the Alameda County Fair, for its exceptional support of a community event hosted at the Fairgrounds. The award, which goes to individuals, businesses or organizations that raise the bar as far as the industry is concerned, was the result of the Fair's support of the "East Bay Stand Down" event, held at the Fairgrounds in August of 2008. Only one or two Merrill Awards are issued each year throughout the United States and Canada.

The East Bay Stand Down (EBSA) event provides a respite from the streets so that needy and homeless veterans can examine avenues of assistance. EBSA places the participants into residential programs, offer employment, and provide follow-up programs of various types such as oral health care, legal and medical care. Additionally, new clothing, boots and other basic needs are offered to the homeless veterans.

"Every one wants to support our troops but doing so means more than a sticker on your car," said WFA Executive Director Stephen Chambers. "The team at the Alameda County Fair demonstrated true commitment with their support of the East Bay Stand Down."

"Winning this award is a testament to our successful endeavor in giving back to the Bay Area community and Fair industry. We have long been a mentor to the industry and will always strive to be a leader in promoting strong community involvement," commented CEO Rick Pickering.

The 2008 Alameda County Fair also took home 36 WFA awards at the 86th Annual Achievement Awards Convention in Reno, NV last week. The 36 awards were the result of 46 entries submitted for consideration. For each of the past five years, the Alameda County Fairgrounds has received more industry awards than any other Fair in the Western United States. The 2008 Fair, which enjoyed a turnout of close to 360,000 patrons for its 17-day event, received 26 First Place honors, 8 Second Place and 2 Third Place awards.

During the convention, Alameda County Fair CEO Rick K. Pickering turned over Board Presidency to Jon Baker, CEO of the Pima County Fair in Arizona. Pickering, previously Vice President, WFA Treasurer and Board of Directors member, proudly continues to be an integral factor in the growth of the WFA and Fair industry as a whole.

"Rick led the rebuilding of the California Fairs Alliance (the industries political arm) and the development of our charitable partner, the Blue Ribbon Foundation, during his term as Board President," said Chambers. "He also undertook and led a WFA Board Strategic Planning effort that drove many of the positive changes at the 2009 Convention as well as dealing with major staff changes."

Among the Alameda County Fair's 26 First Place awards at the WFA Convention, the Fair was presented with top honors for its Agricultural Education Program, Community Relevance, Emergency Plan, Conservation Program, Children's Program and Innovative Use of Technology.

Over the past five years the Alameda County Fair has been host to over 2 million fair goers, 30,000 part time employees and hundreds of thousands of exhibitors, artists, performers and participators. Providing an educational, competitive and fun venue for patrons and participants is serious business; rising to the top of the Fair industry is the result of that commitment.

Historically, the nature of the Fair has always been to promote cultural education and showcase community talents and achievements. Couple that historic foundation with a continued drive to provide new as well as traditional all-aged entertainment and you get a venue that will always have a place in the heart of America. Repeatedly taking home a large number of industry awards simply supports the Alameda County Fair's principal to be one of the best all-around entertainment venues for Bay Area residents.

Planning is currently underway for the next award-winning annual Fair. The 2009 Fair will celebrate the

summertime with the theme “Come Out & Play”, which will run from July 1st through July 19th, closed on Mondays. For more information, please visit our website at [www.AlamedaCountyFair.com](http://www.AlamedaCountyFair.com) or call (925) 426-7600.

Conveniently located off of the Bernal Exit from the 680 Highway in Pleasanton California. The 267 acres of beautifully landscaped, park-like grounds is host to over 3 million visitors annually. Events include trade and consumer shows, festivals, corporate picnics, and much more. For more information about the Alameda County Fairgrounds or the annual Fair, please visit [www.AlamedaCountyFair.com](http://www.AlamedaCountyFair.com) or call 925-426-7600.

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