



Alameda County Fairgrounds
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALAMEDA COUNTY FAIR MANAGER CHOSEN AS NEW CEO, CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR

Alameda County Fair moves up to #33 in Top 50 Fairs in North America

PLEASANTON, CA – December 17, 2012 - The Board of Directors of the California State Fair & Exposition has announced the selection of Rick Pickering as the State Fair's new Chief Executive Officer. Pickering has been at the helm of the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton since January of 1999 and has been credited with the Fairs remarkable growth. In the past four years alone, the Alameda County Fair has experienced a 44% increase in attendance, making it the 33rd largest Fair in North America. With more than 3,000 Fairs in North America, the Alameda County Fair is now ranked in the top 1%. Additionally, the Alameda County Fair has become one of the most decorated Fairs in the United States and Canada.

According to Stephen Chambers, Executive Director of the Western Fairs Association (WFA,) "Rick Pickering has regularly been selected by his peers to lead our industry forward. He is the only Fair CEO to have served as President of the WFA, Chairman of the California Fairs Alliance, President of the California Authority of Racing Fairs, and President of the California Fairs Services Authority." "If aliens landed and said 'take us to your leader,' we would bring them to Rick's office!" Chambers added. He also noted that Pickering was recently selected as the 2013 inductee to the WFA Hall of Fame. An official Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held on January 24, 2013.

Janet Lockhart, President of the Alameda County Fair Board commented, "We have greatly appreciated Rick's wise insight and business leadership over the years. While we will dearly miss him, we take pride in the fact that he is moving up to the California State Fair, and we know that he will be able to further strengthen California's Fair industry from his new position." President Lockhart added that the Fair Board plans to use a professional recruiting firm to perform a national search, as they did when they hired Pickering in 1999.

Pickering noted that the Fair's significant success during his tenure is a credit to the positive relationships between the Fair Board, County of Alameda, City of Pleasanton, a highly talented leadership team, millions of patrons, etc. He noted, "While the CEO is often credited with the success of the organization, it's really the work of many people getting the right things done, in the right ways, at the right time – people focused on the unifying purpose of serving others."

In testament to this, Nate Miley, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors said, "Rick Pickering has greatly contributed to the numerous successes of the Alameda County Fairgrounds as Chief Executive Officer. Rick managed to overcome economic difficulties during his tenure and brought recognition to the Alameda County Fair by winning many top awards in the industry. Rick's accomplishments have put the County in a positive light. We are grateful for Rick's leadership and he will be missed."

According to the City of Pleasanton, "We have enjoyed a great working relationship with Rick Pickering. He is an extraordinary professional and we wish him much success in the next chapter of his career," Nelson Fialho, City Manager.

Prior to taking over the Alameda County Fair, Pickering served as the Deputy General Manager of the Orange County Fair in Costa Mesa and spent 12 years in city management, including stints with the Cities of Costa Mesa, Torrance, Manhattan Beach and Cerritos. In recognition of his professional and community achievements, in 2010 the Boy Scouts of America presented him with the prestigious Distinguished Eagle Scout Award. This national recognition is presented to 1 in every 1,000 Eagle Scouts for a lifetime of achievement. All three of Pickering's sons are also Eagle Scouts.

Planning is currently underway for the 101st Alameda County Fair. The 2013 Fair will celebrate with a theme of "Summer Fun Starts Here," and will run from June 19th through July 7th; closed on Mondays. For more information, please visit our website at www.alamedacountyfair.com or call 925-426-7600.

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