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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Leadership, Education and Fiscal Expertise Drive Selections**

*DUE TO RECENT RETIREMENTS, THE ALAMEDA COUNTY FAIR BOARD SELECTS FIVE NEW MEMBERS*

**PLEASANTON, CA – JANUARY 5, 2012** - Five new Directors have been selected to serve on the Board of the Alameda County Agricultural Fair Association. As one of the largest non-profit organizations in Northern California, the Fair Association's twenty-six Board Members oversee the operations of the Alameda County Fairgrounds with over three million visitors each year. The Alameda County Fair Board of Directors welcomes the knowledge, expertise, and community ties that Dawna Dowdell of Alameda, a successful banker; Michael Mahoney of Hayward, President and CEO of St. Rose Hospital; Robert Sherratt of Alameda, a retired educator of Alameda Unified School District; John Smith of Fremont, a successful business leader with Mason-McDuffie; and Ron Zeno, Executive Director of Safe Exchange, a local non-profit agency, each bring to the Board. President of the Fair Board Patrick O'Brien states, "The proven management experience and community leadership skills of these five new board members will be a true asset to the Fair Board."

Alameda's Dawna Dowdell has been a personal banking officer with Bank of America since 1999. Dowdell's experience in banking and finance will be a valuable asset to the Fair Board. She is involved in a variety of community organizations including the Alameda Kiwanis, Meals on Wheels and as a long-time volunteer for the City of Alameda Police Department. "My vision for the Alameda County Fairgrounds is to make sure that the public has a safe environment in which to enjoy the many entertainment and education attractions offered at the Fairgrounds," says Dowdell.

Hayward resident Michael Mahoney has served over 20 years as President and CEO of St. Rose Hospital. With these many years of experience, he brings a wealth of knowledge in the development of public policy and community programs that operate on sound business principles while serving those within Alameda County. Mahoney has served on a variety of state, regional and local trade association Boards in addition to his involvement with the Hayward Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club. "In these challenging economic times, the Fair is a great example of how to meet a very public mission with positive financial and operational performance," states Mahoney. He adds, "I look forward to serving on

the Board to learn more about how to continue past successes for the future enjoyment of the public.”

Alameda's Don Sherratt has over 40 years in education as a teacher and site administrator. After retiring in 2001 from the Alameda Unified School District, Sherratt continued to serve as their Chief of Personnel Officer for many years. Currently, he is a professor at Alliant International University. Sherratt's educational background and involvement in education and recreation will be a tremendous asset to the Fair Board. “My goal is to continue to promote the Fairgrounds as a location for events year round that meets the needs of families and special organizations,” says Sherratt.

Fremont resident John Smith is currently a realtor in Hayward and has many years of business experience with Levi Strauss & Company. At Levi he had a successful merchandising career serving in many capacities from product management to brand market development. With over 35 years of experience in business, marketing and sales, Smith hopes to utilize his professional background to continue to lead the Alameda County Fair as one of the most progressive and forward looking Fairs in the United States. “With the management experience I have within a large corporation such as Levi Strauss & Company, I feel I can assist the Board and Fair Management team in growing the Fairground's business,” states Smith.

Oakland's Ron Zeno is Executive Director of Safe Exchange, a non-profit agency that oversees court-ordered supervised visitation. He has additional experience as a teacher and counselor for at-risk kids in Richmond. Zeno has been actively involved in his community serving on a variety of Boards including Children's Fairyland and volunteering with Boy Scouts and the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. “I plan to enrich the lives of those that attend the Alameda County Fair by helping to organize the many educational and fun activities offered,” says Zeno.

The Fairgrounds is home to the oldest one mile Race Track in America dating back to 1858. The Fair Association is well underway preparing for the 2012 Alameda County Fair to be held June 20 through July 8, closed Mondays. The Alameda County Fair is ranked as one of the top 50 fairs in the United States and has won numerous awards both nationally and internationally. The Fairgrounds also hosts more than 300 events annually. Visit the Fair's website at [www.AlamedaCountyFair.com](http://www.AlamedaCountyFair.com) or call 925-426-7600 for more information.

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