



2015 Media Kit

State Fair of Texas Public Relations Department
(214) 421-8715
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MEDIA RELATIONS

Media Contact Information

Public Relations Department

The Public Relations team handles all media services for the State Fair of Texas. Please see contact information below for the full-time and seasonal PR team.

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All contacts can be reached via (214) 421-8715

Media Resources

Media Entrance & Parking Information

The designated parking area for all media is Gate 3, located on Washington Avenue. All media personnel must obtain a media parking pass in order to enter through Gate 3. Media parking passes are to be obtained from the Public Relations Department prior to arrival at the Fair. Media personnel can contact the PR Department at (214) 421-8715 in order to request a parking pass. All media parking passes must be issued for the 2015 State Fair and cannot be reused from previous years. Please provide specific information to the PR team regarding your visit (i.e. how many people will be in attendance, if you will be using a satellite truck, if you will be doing a live broadcast, etc.) The PR Department will provide golf cart transportation for media personnel based on availability of PR staff members and availability of carts.

Public Information Officer for the State Fair of Texas

For information regarding incidents, safety issues and police activity during the Fair, please contact:

Karissa Condoianis

Director of Public Relations/Public Information Officer

(214) 289-3318

kcondoianis@bigtex.com

Emergency Contact Information

Police (Onsite)

(214) 421-8830

Dallas Police Department officers patrol the fairgrounds and surrounding areas on foot, on bicycle, on horseback, in golf carts and from elevated towers. The Police Station is located next to Guest Relations near the Midway Arch.

First Aid

(214) 421-8818

First Aid Stations are located in the Coliseum and on First Avenue adjacent to the Children's Aquarium. Police can call paramedics to other areas of the park when necessary.

Lost Children

(214) 421-8855

Children who have been separated from their parents are escorted by police officers to the Lost Children Center located near the Midway Arch, next to Guest Relations. The center is staffed to look after the youngsters until a parent reclaims them. Safe Kids ID wristbands are available at all State Fair Information Centers, located throughout the fairgrounds.

Guest Relations

(214) 421-8820

Fairgoers with questions or concerns are invited to visit the Guest Relations office, located near the Midway Arch and open during Midway operating hours.

Lost & Found (during Fair time)

(214) 243-2464

Lost & Found (outside of Fair time)

(214) 670-8333

Lost & Found is located inside the Police Station near the Midway Arch.

Interview Arrangements

Media may contact the Public Relations Department to coordinate interviews for news segments, articles, etc. Please call (214) 421-8715 regarding any interview requests.

Social Media Accounts

The State Fair of Texas is active on the following:

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/statefairoftx>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/statefairoftx>

Instagram

<https://instagram.com/statefairoftx/>

Pinterest

<https://www.pinterest.com/statefairoftx/>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/StateFairofTexas>

SnapChat

@StateFairofTX

Periscope

@StateFairofTX

ABOUT THE STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

State Fair of Texas by the Numbers (numbers based on figures from 2014)

- 24 consecutive days
- 277 acres
- 129 years of history
- 100 daily shows & activities
- 85 free concerts on the Chevrolet Main Stage
- 70 rides on the Midway
- 70 games on the Midway
- 225 concession stands throughout the fairgrounds
- 6,000 seasonal employees hired every year for the Fair
- Estimated \$608 million annual economic impact on the North Texas community
- More than \$42 million in coupon sales for food and rides
- More than 300,000 pounds of canned food collected during the Fair & donated to local food banks
- 1,100 categories of Creative Arts contests across 12 different subject areas
- More than 9,300 Creative Arts contest entries
- More than 3,100 livestock exhibitors
- More than 9,500 livestock entries
- 400,000 square feet of indoor exhibit space devoted to the Auto Show & shopping venues
- 175,000 square feet of outdoor space devoted to the Truck Zone
- Approximately 400 cars on display throughout the Auto Show
- More than 50,000 test drives at the Chevrolet Ride & Drive
- More than 1.8 million free admission tickets provided to students and teachers in North Texas school districts
- Over its 23 year history, the Youth Scholarship Program has awarded scholarships to more than 1,600 students for a total of more than \$4.5 million

State Fair of Texas Historical Trivia

- The event now known as the State Fair of Texas can trace its origins back to the Dallas State Fair and Exposition, chartered by a group of local businessmen including W.H. Gaston, John S. Armstrong and Thomas L. Marsalis in **1886**.
- In **1887** this group merged with the Texas State Fair and Exposition, run by C.A. Keating.
- In **1904** the Fair sold its property to the City of Dallas, under an agreement that set aside a period each fall to hold the annual exposition. As part of these new terms, the Fair was reorganized and renamed the State Fair of Texas.
- In addition, new bylaws were written that established the State Fair as a nonprofit organization. Its nonprofit purpose is funded through the proceeds from the annual State Fair of Texas event. The net proceeds from the Fair are reinvested in Fair Park, in the form of capital improvements; given as scholarships to deserving youth throughout the state of Texas; used to support the Fair Park museum facilities and community outreach programs; and used to improve the State Fair's operation.

- The terms of this agreement have been carried out for more than 100 years now and continue to serve as a reminder of the State Fair’s deep-rooted history and connection to Fair Park and the city of Dallas.
- In **1890**, the Women Christian Temperance Union had the first “lost children’s station.” They would ring the bell until a parent showed up.
- In **1902**, a Confederate Army reunion was held at the fairgrounds. A fire broke out and destroyed three main buildings that year but the Fair still opened.
- The first official Texas/OU game was played in **1900**, but was not played in Dallas until **1912**. The game was first played in Fair Park during the run of the Fair in **1929**.
- In **1916**, the new sandwich sensation of the World’s Fair was introduced at the State Fair of Texas; it was known as the hamburger.
- Fair attendance topped 1 million for the first time in **1916**.
- In **1918** the United States government took over Fair Park and converted it into Camp Dick, a military training center used by the U.S. Army during WWI. Because of this, there was no State Fair in 1918.
- With betting on horse races again legalized in Texas, a new racetrack complex was built in the northeast corner of Fair Park in **1934**.
- In **1934** Dallas was named the host city for the central celebration of the 1936 Texas Centennial, meaning Fair Park would be the site of a six-month exposition.
- In **1936** the Texas Centennial Exposition opened with festivities including a downtown parade viewed by 150,000 spectators and a gala "Ceremony of Flags" in the Cotton Bowl.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt attended the **1936** Centennial Exposition and spoke to the crowds of fairgoers.
- Fritos corn chips were successfully introduced to the public during the **1936** Texas Centennial.
- Native Texan Ginger Rogers was crowned “Centennial Queen” at the **1936** Centennial Exposition.
- The Texas Centennial closed with a final attendance count of 6,353,827. The exposition's legacy includes the structures which today house the Hall of State, Perot Museum of Natural & Science at Fair Park, Children’s Aquarium, Texas Discovery Gardens and D.A.R. House.
- In **1937** most of the Centennial's exhibitors and attractions returned to Fair Park for a five-month-long celebration, the Greater Texas and Pan American Exposition.
- The Hall of State was one of four permanent museums open to fairgoers in **1938**.
- "Opera Under the Stars," later called the Starlight Operettas, introduced summer theater to Dallas audiences in **1941**. The shows were presented in Fair Park's Band Shell. The series moved indoors in **1951** and is known today as the Dallas Summer Musicals.
- The Ice Capades was a major fair time attraction from **1941** until **1967**.
- Fletcher’s Corny Dogs were introduced at the Fair in **1942** during the summer Midway operation. The first corny dogs sold for 15 cents each. Fletcher’s representatives say they now sell roughly 500,000 corny dogs each year during the 24 days of the Fair. The term “Corny Dog” is trademarked by Fletcher’s. Other vendors sell “corn dogs.”
- The **1942** State Fair of Texas was cancelled because of World War II. It re-opened October 5, **1946**.
- Star of the New York World’s Fair, Elsie the Borden Cow, made her debut at the **1946** State Fair of Texas with lines stretching two blocks to see her.
- State Fair visitors rode the Comet roller coaster for the first time in **1947**.

- In **1951** R.L. Thornton purchased a large Santa Claus figure from the Kerens Chamber of Commerce and commissioned local artist Jack Bridges to make a giant cowboy out of the material.
- Big Tex made his first debut at the **1952** State Fair.
- Elvis Presley performed at the Cotton Bowl in **1956** for a screaming audience of 26,500.
- In **1958** the old racetrack grandstand was torn down to make way for the new Coliseum which would then be selected to host the first-ever National Finals Rodeo during the 1959 Christmas season.
- Vice President Richard Nixon cut the ribbon to open the Fair in **1959**.
- Many Texans saw color television for the first time while visiting the Fair in the late **1950s**.
- Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson attended the **1961** State Fair, bringing with him a Pakistani camel cart driver as his guest.
- Workmen set up Big Tex early in September **1961** for his role that year in the movie remake of "State Fair" starring Pat Boone, Ann-Margret and Bobby Darin. Tailing winds from Hurricane Carla tore Big Tex's clothes and the production crew was forced to shoot around him until repairs could be made.
- Belgian waffles were first introduced to fairgoers in **1964**.
- King Olaf V of Norway cut the ribbon at opening ceremonies of the **1982** State Fair.
- The 212-foot-tall Texas Star, the tallest Ferris wheel in North America at the time, was built in Italy and moved to Fair Park in time to operate during the **1985** State Fair.
- After serving as the State Fair's home for a whole century, Fair Park was officially designated a National Historic Landmark in **1986** because of its historical significance.
- The Sesquicentennial edition of the State Fair of Texas attracted more than 3.9 million visitors during a 31-day run. Top attractions at the **1986** State Fair of Texas included a major exhibit from the People's Republic of China and the Incredible Acrobats of China. In addition, pig races were offered for the first time.
- In **1994** Former President George H.W. Bush cut the ribbon to open the Fair. Pat Sajak & Vanna White and the rest of the Wheel of Fortune crew paid a weeklong visit to the Fair.
- In **1999** Big Tex received a new look for the Fair.
- In **2003** Rich LeFevre of Nevada managed to eat 12 corny dogs in ten minutes during the First Annual World Corny Dog Championship.
- **2005** brought the first annual Big Tex Choice Awards, a challenge for concessionaires to create new and unique food items to be sold at the Fair.
- The Texas SkyWay made its debut on opening day of the **2007** Fair, offering visitors bird's-eye and panoramic views of historic Fair Park.
- **2011** marked 125 years of the Fair, inspiring the theme "A Timeless Tradition."
- The Top o' Texas Tower ride was completed in time for the **2013** Fair. At 500 feet tall, it remains the tallest tower ride in the country to date.
- Famous people who have attended the State Fair of Texas over the years include Booker T. Washington, Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, Enrico Caruso, Chief Quanah Parker, Harry Houdini, Art Linkletter, Hoot Gibson, Jimmy Doolittle, the Lone Ranger, Admiral Chester Nimitz, Audie Murphy, Duke Ellington, Princess Grace, the actor Ronald Reagan and King Olaf V of Norway.
- United States Presidents who have attended the Fair include William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, Lyndon B. Johnson, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush.
- Several shows have visited the Fair either in live performances or for film: The Tommy Dorsey Show featured Jackie Gleason and Gypsy Rose Lee; Follies Bergere; Queen for a Day; Truth or

Consequences; The Ellen Show; The Oprah Winfrey Show; Animal Planet; Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern; Wheel of Fortune and the Ice Capades.

- Musicians who have performed on the Chevrolet Main Stage include Garth Brooks, Willie Nelson, Tim McGraw, the Dixie Chicks, Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Brad Paisley, Miranda Lambert, Lady Antebellum, Eli Young Band, Selena, Emilio, the Jonas Brothers, Demi Lovato, Christina Aguilera, Destiny's Child, Boys II Men, the Commodores, the Pointer Sisters, Kelly Rowland, Molly Ringwald, KC and The Sunshine Band, Kool & The Gang, Fantasia and Collective Soul.

Big Tex Trivia

- In **1951** State Fair President and former Mayor of Dallas R.L. Thornton purchased a large Santa Claus figure from the Kerens Chamber of Commerce for \$750 and commissioned local artist Jack Bridges to make a giant cowboy out of the material
- Big Tex made his first debut at the **1952** State Fair of Texas
- His voice was first added in **1953**, then a friendly wave in **1997**
- On **October 19, 2012**, Big Tex was destroyed by an electrical fire, the same year he celebrated his 60th birthday
- New and improved, Big Tex returned in time to welcome fans for the **2013** State Fair
- Big Tex stands tall, measuring 55 feet in height
- His outfit is sewn in the original Dickies plant that opened in 1922 in Fort Worth
- His Western shirt runs a size 200 x 325 (neck x sleeve); an average man's size is 16 x 32
- It takes a week to make Big Tex's jeans; they weigh 100 pounds and are replicas of Dickies popular 5-pocket jeans
- An outfit typically lasts three seasons – not only so Big Tex is in the most up-to-date Western fashion, but also due to the wear and tear that occurs during the 24-day event
- He wears a 95 gallon hat and a 33-foot-long belt
- His boots are replicas of a 1949 Lucchese design, size 96
- He's appeared in local, regional, national and international news coverage
- His resume also includes film – he appeared in the 1961 remake of "State Fair" alongside Pat Boone, Ann-Margret and Bobby Darin
- In **2014** Big Tex was voted "Quirkiest Landmark in America" by USA Today & 10Best and received a new red, white and blue shirt from Dickies as a tribute to the Lone Star flag

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Our Mission:

The State Fair of Texas celebrates all things Texan by promoting agriculture, education and community involvement through quality entertainment in a family-friendly environment.

The State Fair of Texas is committed to...

- Education and Agriculture as our foundation.
- Operating in a fiscally conscious manner.
- Providing excellent customer service.
- Investing in the Fair product, our Fair Park home, and our community.
- Responsible stewardship to ensure that the State Fair of Texas will thrive for future generations.
- Preserving the traditions of our historic institution.
- Constant innovation for future Fairs' success.

Since its establishment in 1886, the State Fair of Texas has celebrated all things Texan by promoting agriculture, education and community involvement through quality entertainment in a family-friendly environment. As a nonprofit organization, the Fair serves as an advocate for the community through its commitment to preserving Fair Park and continuing to build upon its legacy as a National Historic Landmark. At 24 consecutive days, the State Fair of Texas is the longest-running fair in the nation, as well as one of the largest. As shown by its tremendous growth, the Fair is able to continuously evolve while staying true to its original purpose. Through its rich and lengthy history, it remains evident that the State Fair serves not only as an annual celebration, but as a unique destination that brings people together and allows them to create lifelong memories.

Tradition

As a celebration of Texas heritage, the State Fair aims to embody all aspects of Lone Star culture. Although much has changed since its humble beginnings as a local fair and exposition, the State Fair of Texas still embraces its historical roots and strives to preserve the traditions upon which it was built. After serving as the State Fair's home for a whole century, Fair Park was officially designated a National Historic Landmark in 1986 because of its historical significance. With 129 years of shared history, the State Fair has maintained a deep-rooted connection to Fair Park and continues to call it home. From its longtime devotion to Fair Park, to its lasting dedication to fairgoers, the State Fair considers tradition an essential component of its organization. Year after year millions of visitors come from far and wide to experience the event, holding a special place in their hearts for the State Fair of Texas and its beloved icon, Big Tex.

Agriculture

Agriculture serves not only as a pillar of this organization, but as a fundamental feature of the Lone Star state and its history. The State Fair of Texas offers a variety of interactive exhibits focusing on agriculture and livestock, implementing hands-on activities that are both enjoyable and informative. Activities range from feeding furry friends at the petting zoo, to learning about different livestock species during daily guided tours of the barns. Little Hands on the Farm lets kids enjoy a "day on the farm" while teaching them how food gets from farm to table. Each year approximately 5,200 students from around the state work diligently in preparation for the competitive livestock events and leadership contests at the State Fair. As the largest of these events, the annual Youth Livestock Auction celebrates the agricultural heritage of our great state, while also providing more than \$22 million in scholarships and prizes to students across Texas since 1990.

Education

Home to the world's largest collection of Art-Deco structures, Fair Park houses some of Dallas' top museums and cultural centers. By providing fairgoers with a wide variety of educational exhibits throughout the grounds, the State Fair of Texas is also supporting the individual missions of its fellow Fair Park establishments. With a focus on educating visitors about Texas history and agriculture, the Fair offers a unique experience that is both informative and entertaining. From stingray feedings at the Children's Aquarium to butterfly releases at the Texas Discovery Gardens, fairgoers have access to a number of science and nature discovery programs right at their fingertips. Each year the State Fair partners with the Dallas Historical Society to create a special exhibit that features different elements of Texas history, displayed in the Hall of State. In addition, fairgoers can learn about Hispanic culture at the Mundo Latino exhibit in the Women's Museum, or take a tour of the African American Museum, home to one of the largest collections of African American folk art in the country. Through a series of hands-on exhibits and activities, fairgoers get to learn all about agriculture and its impact on the state of Texas, whether it's the importance of farming and ranching or the process of raising and caring for animals. Experts from the Dallas Police Department share their knowledge on training and working with horses, while livestock professionals demonstrate the proper way to milk a cow. Thanks to the continued support of loyal fairgoers, the State Fair is able to provide a diverse assortment of educational programming for all ages.

Community

As a long standing Dallas institution, the State Fair of Texas has a unique appreciation for the local support that makes such a big event possible every year. With the ultimate goal of having a positive community impact, the Fair aims to give back through its partnerships with charities like Construction and the North Texas Food Bank. As part of its mission to contribute on a local level, the Fair currently donates more than 1.8 million free admission tickets each year to students and teachers at North Texas schools. By providing job opportunities to more than 6,000 seasonal employees every year, the Fair not only brings jobs to the community, but has an estimated annual economic impact of approximately \$608 million on North Texas. In addition to supporting the DFW metroplex, the State Fair of Texas works to maintain an active role in the community statewide. Through its Youth Scholarship Program, the State Fair awards college scholarships to graduating seniors from five DISD high schools in the Fair Park area, as well as students from around the state of Texas who have competed in State Fair livestock events. This program has awarded more than \$4.5 million in college scholarships since its establishment in 1992. Adding an artistic element to its community initiatives, the Fair hosts more than 1,100 competitions through its Creative Arts department. With categories ranging from art and photography to sewing and cooking, the State Fair gives professionals and amateurs of all ages a multitude of opportunities to showcase their creative skills. By offering affordable entertainment that is both fun and family-friendly, the Fair hopes to bring a one-of-a-kind experience to the community.

State Fair of Texas Leadership

Richard Knight, Jr. – Chairman of the Board

Alan Walne – Past Chairman of the Board

Mitchell Glieber – President

Bob Hilbun – Senior Vice President & General Manager

Jaime Navarro – CFO & Senior Vice President, Finance

Rusty Fitzgerald – Senior Vice President, Operations

Carey D. Risinger – Senior Vice President, Food, Beverage & Retail

Daryl Real – Vice President, Agriculture & Livestock

Jennifer Schuder – Vice President, Marketing

History of the State Fair of Texas as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

The event now known as the State Fair of Texas can trace its origins back to the Dallas State Fair and Exposition, chartered by a group of local businessmen including W.H. Gaston, John S. Armstrong and Thomas L. Marsalis in 1886. In 1887 this group merged with the Texas State Fair and Exposition, run by C.A. Keating. In 1904 the Fair sold its property to the City of Dallas, under an agreement that set aside a period each fall to hold the annual exposition. As part of these new terms, the Fair was reorganized and renamed the State Fair of Texas. In addition, new bylaws were written that established the State Fair as a nonprofit organization. Its nonprofit purpose is funded through the proceeds from the annual State Fair of Texas event. The net proceeds from the Fair are reinvested in Fair Park, in the form of capital improvements; given as scholarships to deserving youth throughout the state of Texas; used to support the Fair Park museum facilities and community outreach programs; and used to improve the State Fair's operation. The terms of this agreement have been carried out for more than 100 years now and continue to serve as a reminder of the State Fair's deep-rooted history and connection to Fair Park and the city of Dallas.

Where do the funds go?

The State Fair of Texas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and does not receive any government funding or support. Its nonprofit purpose is funded through the proceeds from the annual State Fair of Texas event. The net proceeds from the Fair are reinvested in Fair Park, in the form of capital improvements; given as scholarships to deserving youth throughout the state of Texas; used to support the Fair Park museum facilities and community outreach programs; and used to improve the State Fair's operation. Your trip to the Fair is more than just an annual tradition – it's a chance for you to give back to the community. By attending the event, you are supporting the Fair's mission of celebrating all things Texan by promoting agriculture, education, and community involvement through quality entertainment in a family-friendly environment.

State Fair of Texas Youth Scholarship Program

Thanks to the support of loyal fairgoers, the State Fair of Texas is able to maintain an active role in the community, both locally and statewide. As part of its initiative, the State Fair integrates a passion for education and community involvement into its annual scholarship program. Over its 23 year history, the State Fair of Texas Youth Scholarship Program has received and reviewed more than 4,000 applications and has awarded scholarships to more than 1,600 students for a total of more than \$4.5 million.

Established in 1992, the Youth Scholarship Program awards multiple college scholarships to selected applicants each year. Within the program are two different scholarships – the Pete Schenkel Scholarship and the Youth Livestock Scholarship. The Pete Schenkel Scholarship is named after a longtime friend and supporter of the State Fair of Texas. Pete Schenkel served as chairman of the Fair’s board from 1999-2003 and was the 2011 recipient of the prestigious Linz Award, which recognized his civic service and humanitarian efforts benefiting Dallas. Eligible recipients for the Pete Schenkel Scholarship include graduating high school seniors from five Dallas Independent School District high schools in the Fair Park area – Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women’s Leadership School, James Madison, Lincoln, North Dallas and Woodrow Wilson High Schools. The Youth Livestock Scholarship awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors around the state of Texas who have participated in competitive livestock events held at the State Fair and are pursuing a degree in an agricultural-related field.

Both scholarships require students to attend an accredited college or university within the state of Texas and exhibit high scholastic achievement by maintaining a cumulative 3.0 or better grade point average in order to be renewed. Scholastic performance is important, with preference given to students ranking in the top 25% of their class. Scholarships are paid over four years, with the payment going directly to the college or university on the student’s behalf. Recipients receive a \$6,000 grant, renewable in \$1,500 annual increments if the student meets the criteria for renewal.

After serving as an integral part of the organization for 23 years, the State Fair of Texas Youth Scholarship Program continues to uphold the Fair’s mission by supporting agriculture, education and community involvement. The State Fair is delighted to carry on the tradition year after year. In 2015, the State Fair awarded college scholarships to 150 graduating seniors, with 55 Pete Schenkel Scholarship recipients and 95 Youth Livestock Scholarship recipients. In addition, the Fair renewed approximately 197 scholarships for past recipients who are currently attending a state college or university.

WHAT'S NEW IN 2015

Bayou Sculptors: Call and Response

Home to one of the largest collections of African American folk art in the country, Fair Park's African American Museum is devoted to the preservation and display of artistic, cultural and historical materials. Featuring both rotating and permanent exhibits, the museum is hosting "Bayou Sculptors: Call and Response" during this year's Fair. This special exhibition showcases the work of renowned sculptors with ties to the Bayou, from Louisiana to Houston, Texas.

Beer Haven

Making its State Fair of Texas debut this year, Beer Haven is touted as the world's largest bar on wheels – a 53-foot-long truck serving a wide variety of craft beers on tap. Throughout the run of the Fair, this mobile brewery will feature 60 different beers on tap every day, including a special collection of fair-themed brews like a cotton candy-flavored ale. Fairgoers get the chance to taste local brews while sitting and relaxing at the picnic tables in this shaded grassy locale. As an added attraction on weekends, this venue features live music and entertainment, including visits from brewers sharing tricks of the trade and performing beer-making demos every Saturday!

Big Tex's Farmyard (previously Big Tex's Barnyard)

Old McDonald himself would be impressed by what's happening over on Big Tex's farm. With a brand new location this year, Big Tex's Farmyard provides an educational experience through interactive exhibits as well as live animal displays, including calves, piglets and hatching chicks. Learn all about agriculture and its impact on the state of Texas, from the importance of farming and ranching to the process of raising and caring for animals. This kid-friendly venue is now located near the Kids' Boardwalk, in front of the Lagoon.

Big Texas Music

Texas music is celebrated not only here in our great state, but all across the country. Honoring well-known Texas artists, the "Big Texas Music" exhibit includes memorabilia, audiovisual displays and social interactives, as well as daily live music performances from a wide variety of artists. The exhibit features both artists who were born in Texas and those who have lived here and consider themselves natives. Spanning numerous decades, "Big Texas Music" showcases famous Texas musicians from every genre, celebrating the diverse range of talent hailing from the Lone Star State. This annual exhibit is held in the historic Hall of State and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Entertainment on the Bud Light Sound Stage

Centrally located in Cotton Bowl Plaza, the Bud Light Sound Stage is convenient to all your fair food favorites and features a wide variety of local and regional acts - all included with admission to the Fair. The all-new 2015 lineup ranges from Tejano to classic country, with performances from the Tejas Brothers, Jennifer Nickerson and Ali Dee.

Entertainment on the Dr Pepper Stage

On Nimitz Circle beside the Creative Arts building you will find the Dr Pepper Stage, offering an eclectic mix of musical talent and a quaint grassy area to relax with your friends and family. With several new additions to the 2015 lineup, the Dr Pepper Stage plays host to The Killdares, Chubby Carrier, Coffey Anderson and the Light Crust Doughboys.

Guitarras de Mexico

A celebration of Latin and Hispanic culture, Mundo Latino brings a special exhibit to the Fair every year. Housed inside the Women's Museum, the annual exhibit focuses on a different aspect of Hispanic and Latin culture each year. Mundo Latino presents its new exhibit for 2015, "Guitarras de Mexico." Sharing the history of guitars, guitar makers and guitarists, the showcase has a special focus on instruments made in Paracho, Michoacán - also known as the "Guitar Capital of Mexico." A small town in western Mexico, Paracho is home to a large number of guitar factories and some of the world's best guitar makers. The exhibit includes performances from rondallas, or a musical ensemble of stringed instruments that has roots in Spanish history. As an additional display of authentic Mexican culture, guitar makers, or luthiers, are demonstrating their skills and craftsmanship for visitors who want to learn about the art of guitar making. This exhibit is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Lone Star Horse Spectacular

From 1519 to present day, six flags have flown over the great state of Texas. In the Fair's newest production, visitors get the chance to celebrate the rich history of our state and each of its flags as they are paraded in a horse-led pageantry. Themed to traditional Texas music, the event features professional riders on horseback, performing in coordination with the historical narrative. Sit down and join Texas native Barry Corbin as he narrates the show, telling the spectacular story of the great Lone Star State. The Pan Am Arena hosts this all-new production with 3 daily shows at 3, 4 and 5 p.m.

Mattress Firm Illumination Sensation

Experience the nightly celebration – completely remastered! Set along a scenic reflecting pool, Mattress Firm Illumination Sensation wows the crowd with dancing waters and twice the pyro than ever before. A unique and breathtaking event, the show combines fireworks and high-energy pop music with engaging performances from dancers and acrobats. This sensational 16-minute production of synchronized pyrotechnics and special effects begins nightly at 8 p.m. Show up early to stake out the best vantage points along the Esplanade!

Rooster Crowing Contest

Yet another new attraction concluding this year's Fair, the Rooster Crowing Contest will bring spectators to their feet as competitors fight for the highest number of cock-a-doodle-doo's! Open to all ages, this competition gives participants a limited period of time to coerce their roosters to crow, with the winning title going to the competitor with the most number of crows. Visitors can check out this farm frenzy on Sunday, October 18 in the Poultry Barn.

State Fair of Texas Presents Native America

The State Fair of Texas is thrilled to partner with the United Tribes of Texas to present a new addition to the 2015 lineup. This special event includes demonstrations of both traditional and contemporary Native American culture through music, dance, art and more. Members of several different Native American nations are in attendance, representing the unique traditions that are specific to their group, including performances from dancers dressed in full regalia. Giving fairgoers a taste of authentic Native American history, the event also includes a full-size teepee available for visitors to view. Other features include Native American artisans crafting and selling their creations, such as painters and sculptors, as well as a flute maker demonstrating both his craftsmanship skills and flute-playing abilities. In addition to traditional dancers, weekend entertainment includes a variety of Native American musical talent. An expansive celebration of genuine Native American customs, this event is both educational and engaging for the whole family!

Texas craft beer festival

Lager lovers can take their tasting experience even further by attending a Texas craft beer festival, an all-new event hosted in the historic Cotton Bowl Stadium the final weekend of the Fair. Showcasing both local and international flavors from 70 different Texas breweries, this event is perfect for beer connoisseurs as well as guests who are new to the world of craft beer. Representing their brands, brew masters will also be in attendance, giving fairgoers the chance to talk to the experts and learn more about their unique creations.

Thrifty Thursdays

Through the Fair's newest discount program, participating food vendors are offering one of their signature menu items at a reduced price, ranging from mini versions to regular-size items. Perfect for fairgoers wanting just a tiny taste rather than a full-size meal, or families looking for new ways to save while still getting to enjoy their fair food favorites. Featured items include State Fair classics like corny dogs and funnel cakes, plus many more. A current list of participants is available at bigtex.com/thriftythursdays. Look for participating concessionaires every Thursday of the Fair and put your tasting skills to the test!

Entertainment on the Truck Zone Stage

Visit the Truck Zone Stage to watch renowned wood carver Burt Fleming as he takes a blank section of timber and turns it into a work of art using his chainsaw. Owls, eagles, bears, alligators - Burt can find all these and more inside logs and pieces of wood. This chainsaw carver's natural talent and quick wit are not to miss.

ZuZu African Acrobats (previously MAPAPA African Acrobats)

With a new name and a new location, the ZuZu African Acrobats show off their amazing acrobatic skills on the all-new Mattress Firm Stage along the Esplanade. This group of well-orchestrated team members comprises a gymnastic spectacle and takes the limbo to a new level. These performers wow the crowds with 4 daily shows and an extra show on weekends.

2015 Big Tex Choice Awards Finalists

Chicken Fried Lobster with Champagne Gravy *by Abel Gonzales*

For the first time in Big Tex Choice Awards history, lobster has made its way on the menu. Adding a flair of fair to a traditionally sophisticated dish, this seafood spread includes an entire lobster tail, breaded and deep fried to perfection. Served with a rich sauce combining lemon butter and champagne gravy, the Chicken Fried Lobster is not your typical carnival concoction. With the lavishness of a lobster dinner and the fried factor of a traditional fair food, this dish will satisfy both a fondness for fanciness and a craving for the classics.

Cowboy Corn Crunch *by Isaac Rousso*

In a state known for its cowboy culture, this creation captures the quintessential taste of Texas – all in one bite. A kickin’ mixture of sweet corn, minced jalapeño, rich cream cheese and a hint of smoky bacon, the Cowboy Corn Crunch is the perfect blend of savory and spice. This flavorful tot is fried to a golden, crispy brown and served in a unique palm leaf cone, proving especially convenient when walking while snacking around the fairgrounds. Get your taste buds ready, the first bite will knock your boots off!

Deep Fried Alligator’s Egg Nest *by Cassy Jones*

Also making its Big Tex Choice Awards debut this year, alligator throws a whole new flavor into the mix. Giving fairgoers the true Cajun experience without having to travel all the way to the swamplands, the Deep Fried Alligator’s Egg Nest blends rich alligator meat with Monterey Jack cheese, chopped jalapeños, onions and garlic. This flavorful mixture is then rolled in bread crumbs and deep fried to the perfect golden brown. Served atop a “nest” of shoestring potatoes and drizzled with a chipotle sauce, this dish will make you feel like a real ragin’ Cajun!

Fernie’s Holy Moly Carrot Cake Roly *by Christi Erpillo*

Taking a unique spin on a traditional dessert, this sweet treat turns carrot cake into a heaven-filled roll. Golden-baked bread swirled with cinnamon has been flattened and filled with moist carrot cake, plump raisins and crunchy julienned carrots. Rolled with a light coating of cream cheese and then breaded in a mixture of panko, graham crackers, cinnamon and nutmeg – holy moly this is far from your typical dessert! Drizzled with cream cheese frosting and lightly dusted with powdered sugar, this divine confection is served with extra caramel on the side as well as a caramel macchiato cream sauce.

Fried Beer-Battered Buffalo *by James Barrera*

Sweeter and richer than the highest quality cut of beef, buffalo meat is another “first” on the Big Tex Choice Awards’ list this year. This dish takes lean ground buffalo and gives it the Texas treatment – flavored with a Mesquite smoke and rolled in Pequin chili pepper, known as our state’s official native pepper. The meat is then crusted in crushed Corn Nuts® and dipped in a batter made from Shiner Bock Beer®, also native to the Lone Star State. Lightly dusted with bacon bits and served with a chipotle cream sauce, the Fried Beer-Battered Buffalo is a tiny taste of Texas.

Lone Star Pork Handle *by Justin Martinez*

Meat lovers are in for a treat with this hearty helping of deliciousness. The Lone Star Pork Handle takes a hand-cut bone-in pork chop, marinates it with a rich pork rub, then dips it in batter made from Texas' own Lone Star Beer®. The seasoned pork chop is then smothered in toasted bread crumbs and deep fried to a crisp, golden brown. Finished off with a coat of bourbon barbeque glaze, this savory dish will leave you nothing short of satisfied. As defined in its name, the bone serves as a handle, making this item convenient and easy to carry!

Pretzel-Crusted Pollo Queso *by Allan Weiss*

With a hint of Tex-Mex in both its name and its flavor, the Pretzel-Crusted Pollo Queso is just the right amount of spice. Spicy shredded chicken is combined with a rich blend of cream cheese, Monterey Jack cheese, bacon, cilantro and Sriracha sauce. Rolled into a ball and crusted with a crispy pretzel breading, this item is then deep fried to golden perfection. Served with a jalapeño ranch dipping sauce for an extra kick, this dish is crunchy on the outside while keeping its center perfectly soft and gooey for the ultimate savory experience.

Smoky Bacon Margarita *by Isaac Rousso*

An unconventional pairing of flavors adds a subtle smoky taste to a traditionally tangy drink. The Smoky Bacon Margarita takes the smokiness of freshly-cooked bacon and infuses it into a frozen lime margarita. With just a hint of smoke, this drink still captures the zesty citrus flavor of a traditional margarita. Finished off with a pinch of bacon crumbles on top, this thirst-quenching drink is served in a collectible souvenir cup for an added funky flair. Sip on this refreshing beverage and cool off from the Texas heat! *Contains alcohol – must be 21 years of age.*

2015 Winners

Best Tasting: Fernie's Holy Moly Carrot Cake Roly *by Christi Erpillo*

Most Creative: Smoky Bacon Margarita *by Isaac Rousso*