



For Immediate Release
September 12, 2023

Contact
AGR.PIO@Illinois.gov (217) 670-9283

2023 Illinois State Fair Sets Historic Attendance Records

Great weather, new promotions & infrastructure improvements credited for attendance boost

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Today, Governor JB Pritzker announced record-setting attendance totals for the 2023 Illinois State Fair. The more than 700,000 attendees over the 11-day event make the 2023 fair the most highly attended fair since industry standards were enacted.

“Once again, the hard work of the Department of Agriculture and hundreds of dedicated fair staff have resulted in shattered attendance records, serving as a testament to the value of our increased Fairgrounds funding and the spirit of Illinois,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Attractions like the new Multi-Purpose Arena and our highly attended concerts drew in hundreds of thousands of fairgoers from across the state and the country, bringing our community together in an unprecedented way.”

“While mother nature will always be a driving force in attendance for any outdoor event, the 2023 Fair benefited from a return of programming at the newly renovated Multi-Purpose Arena (MPA), a result of Governor Pritzker’s \$58.1 million dollar capital investment to address years of deferred maintenance on our historic state fairgrounds,” **said IDOA Director Jerry Costello II**. “The 2023 Fair also greatly benefited from new promotions and big attractions aimed at bringing visitors to the fairgrounds mid-week to capitalize on discount admission days.”

The Illinois State Fair also unveiled new theme and discount days to enhance the fairgoer’s experience. On Thursday, August 10, the Fair started with a full day promoting County Fairs and Horse Racing Day. On Tuesday, August 15th, the Fair discounted admission as part of the new weekday theme – TWOsday. This new promotion resulted in more than 27,000 additional fairgoers. The week also allowed for more opportunities for families to attend before the start of school.

“Enhancing the fairgoer’s experience is a vital part of the planning process,” **said State Fair Manager Rebecca Clark**. “Providing additional entertainment on Opening Day, exposing more Illinoisans to our state’s number one industry, and offering more ways for families to affordably enjoy the Illinois State Fair are priorities that proved to be a driving factor in the growth we experienced at the 2023 Illinois State Fair.”

The high attendance numbers reflect the second highest Grandstand tickets sold in the last five years; an 86% increase from 2021 ticket sales for events at the MPA which sat dark in 2022 due to construction; and record-breaking carnival revenue (\$1.58 million) led by robust sales of Mega & Jumbo passes. Thanks to dry weather on the final weekend, race fans were able to enjoy two popular auto races in the Grandstand.

Illinois State Fair: By the Numbers

	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
2023	51,045	62,918	77,176	72,503	51,585	74,881	44,654	53,690	79,176	75,634	64,351	707,613
2022	42,208	59,717	79,298	80,331	49,082	47,555	43,585	43,908	75,182	54,691	61,143	636,700
2021	21,015	49,940	63,604	61,756	38,708	32,746	34,190	30,178	51,390	45,161	43,700	472,388
2019	35,961	39,053	59,040	59,925	44,044	36,818	37,897	37,732	51,641	51,515	55,274	508,900

2023 State Fair Impact by the Numbers:

- \$89,800 in scholarships awarded to youth exhibitors
- 600 new first-time exhibitors
- 60 charities volunteered 20,000 service hours

Governor Pritzker has obligated over \$80 million in infrastructure investments on the fairgrounds. Construction resumes this fall on Phase 2 of the Coliseum, which focuses on an electrical overhaul, underground plumbing, new seating, new restrooms, an elevator, and adding an HVAC system that will allow for year-round use.

Other projects slated to take place include:

- \$9.5 million: Road construction along 8th Street between the IDOA building and the IDNR building and along the backstretch on the northwest corner of the fairgrounds; provides funding to make structural improvements to the south pedestrian tunnel leading into the fairgrounds from Gate 6/infield parking;
- \$4.57 million: Roof replacements on the Junior Livestock Building, Sheep Barn, Hobbies Arts and Crafts Building, and at least three barns along the backstretch;
- \$11.9 million: HVAC replacements on the Orr Building, Illinois Building, Junior Livestock Building, Artisans Building, Hobbies Arts and Crafts Building, and Grandstand;
- \$2.99 million: Tuckpoint work in the Grandstand, Artisans, Hobbies Arts and Crafts, Emmerson and Block (IDOA headquarters) buildings.

Planning is now underway for the 2024 Illinois State Fair, which will run August 8-18.

Be sure to follow the Illinois State Fair on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for the latest news and updates.

###