



interoffice

MEMORANDUM

To: Public Assembly Facilities Commission
From: Cheryle Hartley, Fair Director
Date: October 16, 2023
Subject: **2023 Carolina Classic Fair Attendance & Financial Results**

We are thrilled to share the remarkable accomplishments of the Carolina Classic Fair 2023. Blessed with fantastic weather, the fair saw an impressive 18% increase in attendance compared to the 2022 fair, with a total of 270,190 attendees, exceeding the previous five-year average by 6.5%.

Advance sale admissions soared, with an astounding 80.85% increase from 2022. We made advance sale tickets accessible through both the Fairgrounds Box Office and convenient online print-at-home and mobile device sales.

The positive trend extended to total admission revenue, reflecting the increase in paid attendance. The fair generated \$1,303,637 million in unaudited gate and advance sale admissions, marking a substantial increase from the 2022 Fair, which earned \$1,070,159 million. Additionally, we received \$164,418 in gate surcharges, representing an increase of \$44,270. It is worth noting that the gross admission revenue estimate, currently at \$1,139,219, will be adjusted to account for a 7% reduction, approximately \$79,745, as mandated by the NC General Assembly for sales tax.

Our collaboration with Ticketmaster for the sale of barcoded tickets, which were scanned at the gates for admission, continued to run smoothly. The Fair's box office team, in partnership with Ticketmaster and the carnival staff from Strates Shows, efficiently managed the advance sale wristbands, a crucial aspect of ticket security and future growth of carnival sales and fair percentages. Strates Shows contributed an impressive \$1,089,957 this year, marking a significant 20.62% increase in carnival revenue compared to the 2022 fair's earnings of \$903,581.

Strates Shows introduced two new options for advance sale wristbands: the \$30 weekday wristband and the \$40 weekend wristband. The weekday wristband advance sales effectively distributed traffic to less crowded weekdays. Additionally, the carnival lowered the price of weekday wristbands to \$30 and offered special promotions on Monday, Thursday, and Tuesday, which were well-received by fairgoers.

The Winston-Salem Police Department reported minimal criminal incidents at the Fair. This success can be attributed to the deployment of experienced officers, support, and cooperation from Strates Shows, and the unwavering commitment of the Winston-Salem Police Department.

Our booked attractions and entertainment offerings proved to be highly popular. Notable performances included the Monday night concert featuring Dazz Band and The Family Stone, presented by WQMG, which drew approximately 1,500 attendees. The Chase Matthew, Dylan Marlowe, and Landon Parker concert, sponsored by 93.1 the Wolf, saw an estimated 3,500 attendees, as did the Shane & Shane, Jeremy Rosado, and Seph Schleuter concert. Radio sponsor WBFJ effectively promoted their concert and provided catering provisions for the Fair.

The Demolition Derbies/Figure 8 Races and Rodeos continued to be crowd favorites. The Winston-Salem Chronicle's sponsorship of Gospel/Jazz Fest on the Clock Tower stage, which combined Gospel and Jazz for a full day of entertainment, was a resounding success. The Hispanic League and radio station LaLey sponsored Hispanic Heritage Day on the Clock Tower stage, showcasing multiple talented acts. The Camel City Showcase featured popular local artists on Saturdays, and the stage hosted a diverse range of local and regional talent throughout the Fair.

The wine tastings in Yesterday Village remained a sought-after destination, and the Busch beer garden generated over \$60,000 in beer sales, contributing to the promotion of our local agricultural industry.

Our Souvenir Booth, featuring the Carolina Classic Fair logo, experienced increased merchandise sales, including ball caps, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and lapel pins, resulting in total sales of \$14,912 - a remarkable 30.65% increase over 2022.

This year's Fair offered various discounted options for cost-conscious visitors, such as the Advance Sale discount admission, wristband, and ride card program. We continued our \$5 "Welcome Back" promotion on Opening Day, along with Strates' 100th-year ride promotion, offering 100 minutes of free rides. The NEW School Day promotion, in partnership with Deer Park Spring Water, allowed free admission with the donation of three packaged school supplies, resulting in over 10,000 school items donated to our local school system.

The \$2 Tuesday promotion, offering \$2 admission, \$2 rides, and \$2 food items, was a hit. The Early Bird Special, which provided \$5 admission on weekdays between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm, was embraced by 8,955 fair visitors. Honda Can Am Sea Doo Food Day on Wednesday offered free admission to over 6,500 visitors, who generously brought in over 30,000 pounds of food for Crisis Control Ministry, a meaningful contribution to our community.

Military Day, sponsored by WXII and Piedmont Federal, provided free admission to active duty, veterans, and their immediate families. Family Fun Days offered free children's admission and pay-one-price kiddies' rides to thousands of children on Friday, October 6th.