



COVID Concerns Prompt LA County Fair to Scale Down 2021 Event

Pomona, CA (Feb. 9, 2021) – Amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and its bearing on public events, it was announced today that the LA County Fair is planning a smaller, safer celebration of its annual spree of family, tradition, culture and community.

The Fair was closed in 2020 due to the pandemic, like most large-scale fairs and theme parks, following Los Angeles County and State guidelines. With the availability of a vaccine, Fair organizers were hoping to be able to welcome guests this year. But with coronavirus cases unsteady, and the unpredictability of mutating strains and vaccine roll-outs to larger audiences, it would be fiscally unfeasible to plan a grand celebration only to be told a Fair could not be held.

“To say we are heartbroken is an understatement,” said Fairplex interim CEO Walter M. Marquez. “The LA County Fair is our flagship event, the foundation on which we build our community engagement. But we, in good conscience, could not move forward with planning our big, campus-wide Fair this year, not knowing where the pandemic would be, come summer. It is a public health and financial risk for us to do so.”

Marquez added that there are months of planning that go into the Fair. To plan and invest funding, only to eventually have to cancel, wasn’t feasible.

Los Angeles County Fair Association Chair Heidi Hanson said she is disappointed to not be hosting a regular Fair, but the decision is the right one. “We know our guests will be just as sad as we are. But, we do hope to have some celebration of the Fair in the fall. It may be a much smaller version, but it will be big in spirit.”

The uncertainty of holding annual events is a challenge facing all theme parks and the entertainment industry. Fairplex has cut 90 percent of its public events since March 2020 when the pandemic began, just recently hosting its first public event, a drive-thru Christmas show, Elf on the Shelf’s Magical Journey, with another, Jurassic Quest, coming in late February.

This is the new normal that will probably continue for the rest of this year, said an industry expert.

“It’s a great time to think about the future, but hard to make plans,” said Kevin Lyman, founder of the Kevin Lyman Group, producer of the Vans Warped Tour, and a member of the Los Angeles County Fair Association. “It has been an extremely challenging time for the live events industry, since we are dependent on so many factors that are out of our control. The safety of the patrons is paramount to a successful return to the live entertainment experience, so it is understandable that a venue like Fairplex will err on the side of caution on its plans to re-open.”

Fairplex will announce plans for its modified September event at a later date. The organization also is planning for its Centennial in 2022.

For information on Fairplex, visit www.fairplex.com.

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