



SM: The Altamont fairgrounds have a long and colorful history. When and why was the Altamont Fair started?

AF: The first fair in Altamont was held by The Altamont Driving Park and Fair Association; incorporated on May 20, 1893. A grandstand was built for under \$2,000 and a race track for horse racing was built ready for the first fair only months late, in September, 1893. Adult admission was 25 cents and the net receipts for the four days were \$884.13. We have a brief synopsis of the Altamont Fair history on our website www.altamontfair.com.

SM: How has the fair changed over the years? What aspects have remained the same?

AF: Our newest exhibit is “The Miracle of Birth.” If all goes as planned, a cow will deliver a calf most everyday at the fair, at the new Birthing Center. Our patrons enjoy many of the traditional fair events: the culinary and handcrafts contests, the livestock and animal shows, the rotating themes in the many museums, and of course the Reithoffer Midway. This year we are hosting national music acts—Lady

Success Magazine: After more than a century of being in business, what does success mean to you at the fair?

Altamont Fair: Success is measured in many ways. The mission of the Altamont Fair is to promote agriculture and history through competition, exhibition, display, and instruction. We ask: Have we effectively shared our passion for agriculture and history with the public? Did our patrons enjoy the fun of the midway, the great fair food, and the many museums at the Altamont Fair? And finally, did the organization take in enough money to pay all of its expenses, and have a reserve to begin next year?

Antebellum, Heidi Newfield, Jordan Pruitt and Joey Page, as well as the Stoney Roberts Demolition Derby.

SM: What improvements to the fairgrounds have been made over the years?

AF: We devote much of our time, energy, and money working on the grounds and buildings every year. This year a new stage is being built, the business community effort spearheaded by Jeff Thomas, founder of Weatherguard Roofing, and Peter Bette, founder of Bette and Cring Construction. We’ve added new modern restrooms and blacktopped most of the walkways to make it easier for our patrons to get around the fairgrounds.

SM: How is the fair funded?

AF: Primarily revenue from fair week and rental of the fairgrounds to outside events. We receive some premium reimbursement

fair to attend. This is done as a thank you to everyone, as well as a time to review as a larger body what was successful, and what needs to be changed. Our planning for the next year’s fair begins even before the current year’s fair closes! We rely on volunteers – we couldn’t put on a fair without them!

SM: How do you think the current economy and fuel prices will affect your attendance this year and in the future?

AF: Typically, a troubled economy means better attendance at fairs. We are close to “home” to the tri-county area, with very economical entertainment, and we are also educational. However, the biggest factor influencing attendance is weather; rain is first, heat being the second.

SM: What is the best way for someone to get involved in this non-profit organization?

AF: There are several ways we find good volunteers. Many of the folks start out as exhibitors or vendors. They are subject matter experts; they either volunteer or are asked to participate in program improvements. Other folks work in various capacities, or have family and friends that

do. Finally, some folks come to the fair board with a specific idea to promote. The thought alone is not enough though. With the guidance of the board, the volunteer will plan, execute and evaluate: that is, work the project all the way through.

SM: What do you hope for the future of the Altamont Fair?

AF: I see the future of the Altamont Fair as growing. With ongoing community support, we would all like to see the old grandstand that was lost to a fire in 1995 replaced. With these improvements, we could host larger entertainment acts. In addition, we want to continue to enhance and expand the historical and agriculture exhibits.

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from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets and a bit from the counties. We look for grants. We are always looking for business and community donations or sponsors to assist with specific exhibits or events. The fair is a great way to advertise to thousands and thousands of people cost effectively!

SM: How many people make up your Board of Directors? How does your board work with volunteers to ensure the success of the fair?

AF: There are 15 members elected to the Board of Directors. The board meets every month, working with volunteers to plan. At least once a year, we have a gathering, inviting all the volunteers involved with the