

EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION BREAKS ALL-TIME ATTENDANCE RECORD
1,543,470 ATTEND THE 2018 BIG E

A record number of visitors attended the 2018 Big E, in West Springfield, Mass., breaking the Fair's all-time high attendance figure, with a final tally of 1,543,470. The previous record, of 1,525,553, was set in 2017.

During the Fair's run, the all-time highest single day attendance record was also broken when 172,659 visitors attended Saturday, Sept. 22. Five additional daily attendance records were set: Sept. 14, 87,092; Sept. 15, 118,627; Sept. 23, 134,986; Sept. 27, 105,084; and Sept. 29, 171,965.

Eugene J. Cassidy, president and chief executive officer of the Exposition, said, "The Eastern States Exposition closed its doors on the 102nd edition and another record year! The outpouring of support for this organization from our region is humbling, as that support provides a mechanism for our mission to continue."

A dynamic and diverse concert line-up, fabulous Fair foods, rides and unique shopping experiences provided something for everyone in the family.

World-Class Entertainment

The epic entertainment line-up this year included ticketed and free concerts at the xfinity arena, including: The Marshall Tucker Band; Old Dominion's Happy Endings World Tour; Casting Crowns; B.B. King's Blues Band featuring Tito Jackson; Ice-T; Jacob Sartorius; TwinE Country Fest, featuring The Sisterhood Band, Trent Harmon, Raelynn, Chase Bryant and Tom Dobson; and The Beach Boys.

The covered seating area at the Court of Honor Stage, sponsored by *Mattress Firm*, created a musical oasis in the center of the fairgrounds. Highlights included: HANSON; Tony Orlando in Concert; The Voice Live! with Will Champlin, Biff Gore, Amber Carrington and Noah Lis; Grandmaster Flash; Jefferson Starship and Noah Cyrus. The action wrapped up on Sunday, September 30 with Robby Krieger of The Doors.

The E Stage, sponsored by *Blue Chair Bay Rum*, featured fresh sounds of local and emerging talent, offered every day of the Fair.

Other offerings were the Mardi Gras & Daily Parades, sponsored by *MGM Springfield*; The Big E Circus Spectacular, sponsored by *Coca-Cola*; Swifty Swine Racing Pigs, sponsored by *Leaf Filter Gutter Protection*; Camel Kingdom, sponsored by *Westfield Bank*; North American Midway; Street Performers "Danny DeVito," "Jack Nicholson," and "Robert De Niro," and more.



Exhibits

Eastern States Exposition: A Walk Through History, in the Hampden County Building's auditorium, debuted last year and is now a permanent exhibit that tells the tale of the largest event on the East Coast through photography, memorabilia, artifacts and historic items from the Exposition's archives. Have a seat and take a selfie in a replica of the Skyride; relive the hockey days of the Coliseum; see posters, a replica of Storrowton Village and Joshua L. Brooks' family possessions donated by the late Grace Brooks Knibb, granddaughter of the Exposition's founder.

Delectable Dining

We welcomed new additions to the dining experience in 2018.

New vendors included: Stella's Milk and Cookies; Fluffy's Hand-Cut Donuts; Barbie's Ice Cream; Sweet and Salty; and Cranston Enterprises.

New foods for the 2018 Fair included: the Polish Sampler Platter at Bernat's Deli; Cinn-a-Roll Gourmet Mini Donuts at The Donut Family; Poutine Gourmet's Pulled Pork Poutine; Shrimp Mac & Cheese at the International Lobster House & Yankee Boy; Moolicious' Ripino in peach, orange and lemon; Italian Stuffed Peppers at Deluca's; the Dilly Dilly Dog offered at The Giant Corn Dog; the Quesadilla Burger or Large Tater Tot Keg Kabobs at Captain Nemo's; Bud & Burger Pub's Gourmet Sliders with Toppings; The Coffee Break's Deep Fried Pop Tart; Deep Fried Corn on the Cob from The Deep South Company; and Chompers' Taco Chompers.

Guests also devoured our Big E Cream Puffs and Eclairs, as well as The Big E Craze Burger.

Agriculture

The all new Eastern States Farmers Market and Wine Barn made its debut this year, offering fairgoers a variety of agricultural demonstrations, such as spinning and weaving, in the Fiber Nook, cooking demonstrations in the Demonstration Kitchen, samples from The Big E Gold Medal Cheese Competition and The Big E Northeast Gold Wine, Cider & Perry Competition, new wine slushies and cheese plates in the Wine Café and more. During the course of the Fair, thousands of 4-Hers and FFA members participated in competitions and presented educational demonstrations. The 4-H Beef Grand Champion Steer, raised by Kamryn Forrest, of Rhode Island, was purchased by The Barnyard and Great Country Garages at the Fair's 4-H Beef Auction. ESE purchased the reserve Grand Champion Steer, raised by Victoria Briggs, of New Hampshire. Overall, twenty three steers were sold for an average of \$3.09/lb. this year, an increase of 37% over last year.

The ESE Horse Show, sponsored by *Williams Distributing*, featured Hunters and Hunt Seat Equitation, the USHJA Zone I HOTA finals and the \$15,000 Hunter Classic as well as Saddlebreds, Hackneys, Morgans, Friesians and Opportunity Classes. The Big E Draft Horse Show featured world renowned horseman and performer, Guy McLean, and included the 2018 North American Classic Cart Series Finals, the Haflinger and Hitch Pony Championship series and the \$35,000 Big

E Six-Horse Hitch Showdown, won by Lor-Rob Dairy Farm of East Bethany, New York. The ESE Equestrian Hall of Fame Induction ceremony honored John Bennett on Saturday, Sept. 22.

New England Traditions

Each state building along the Avenue of States put its best foot forward to bring our fairgoers an authentic New England experience. Storrowton Village Museum offered tours of its 19th century buildings, staffed with “villagers” going about their daily routines, as well as historic demonstrations on the Green.

New England Center – This home of The Big E’s Creative Arts department, housed displays of entries and winners in competitions for quilting, lace making, rug hooking, doll making and knitting competitions. The department set a record with 1,731 total entries throughout all contests, judged 277 quilts and had a record 578 entries for the photography contest.

Social media outreach to our fans and followers across the Internet continued to grow this year. When the Fair ended, The Big E had over 225,000 followers on Facebook, more than 11.9K Twitter fans, and 19.2K followers on Instagram. Facebook Live with Julie Harrison, which offered a new look at The Big E each morning, was another huge success this year.

About The Big E

Founded in 1916, The Big E is America’s only multi-state fair celebrating the rich history, culture and traditions of the six New England states. As the principal event of Eastern States Exposition, The Big E has presented the finest livestock; agriculture; innovative commercial, industrial, and artistic developments; and the highest caliber of varied entertainment to the people of the northeastern United States for over a century. The Big E annually draws well over one million visitors through its gates in West Springfield, Massachusetts, and the 17-day event has grown to become the largest fair in the Northeast.

And the tradition continues next fall – September 13-29, 2019. Stay up to date with all the happenings at Eastern States Exposition by finding us on Facebook, following us on Twitter and joining our mailing list – all from our home page – TheBigE.com.

Eastern States Exposition hosts hundreds of shows and events throughout the year. Don’t miss the eighth annual Fiber Festival of New England (details at fiberfestival.org), November 3 & 4, or Yuletide at Storrowton, Dec. 1 & 2.

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