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The Big Fresno Fair Announces Management Restructure To Achieve Long Term Success Through Elevated Fundraising

Visionary CEO John Alkire Transitions to Friends of the Big Fresno Fair as CEO of the Nonprofit Foundation; Seasoned Deputy Managers Stacy Rianda and Lauri King to Remain at the Helm Overseeing and Leading Overall Big Fresno Fair Operations

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, August 28, 2020...The Big Fresno Fair (Fair) Board of Directors announced the transition of visionary Fair CEO John Alkire to the Friends of the Big Fresno Fair (Foundation) as its first CEO. Additionally, the Fair Board voted that Deputy Managers, Stacy Rianda and Lauri King will remain at the helm overseeing all ongoing operations to lead the Fair into the future; no new Fair CEO will be appointed at this time. Both announcements are effective September 1, 2020.

The management restructuring is part of the Fair's strategic plan to elevate fundraising efforts to achieve long term financial independence and success for the 137-year-old Fresno County tradition; an essential function with added emphasis amid the pandemic, which has significantly minimized normal Fair business operations since March.

"On behalf of the Fair Board, we thank John Alkire for his incredible leadership for the past 16 years during which time our Fairgrounds has been visually transformed with permanent features for the entire community to enjoy including two new museums and connections to the community expanded," said Larry Serpa, President of The Big Fresno Fair Board of Directors. "As our Fair moves forward, there is not a more qualified team to lead than Stacy Rianda and Lauri King whose vast industry experience, personal investment in our community and unwavering leadership are quintessential for our future."

Rianda and King have worked alongside Alkire for nearly two decades as part of this revered management team that has garnered four Merrill Awards, the top honor in the fair industry for their vision and innovation. They have worked together to drastically alter the look and operations of the Fresno Fairgrounds to better serve the community and establish engrained community programs to support Fresno County residents – inspiring other fairs throughout the state and nation to adopt similar programs. Rianda and King are highly praised fair professionals with a collective 46 years of industry experience; both have served on the Western Fairs Association Board and have the distinction of





obtaining their Certified Fair Executive (CFE) designation from the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) Institute of Fair Management.

“I’ve said it over and over again, you’re only as good as the team you surround yourself with and I’ve been fortunate to work with the very best in the industry at The Big Fresno Fair. Stacy and Lauri are incredible leaders who work tremendously well together, each bringing their own perspectives and strengths to the table to best serve the Fair. I know they will continue to lead the Fair as they always have to adapt, adjust and emerge a little bit bigger and a little bit better than before,” said John C. Alkire, new CEO of Friends of the Big Fresno Fair.

In his new role, Alkire will focus his efforts on raising funds to support deferred maintenance and overall operations of the Fairgrounds to ensure it is around for future generations to enjoy 365 days a year through community events and the annual Big Fresno Fair. He will also oversee the day-to-day operations of the Big Fresno Fair Museum and Fresno County Historical Museum.

“John Alkire’s transition to the Friends of the Big Fresno Fair is something that has been in the works for a number of years as a strategy to grow the Foundation. It will enable him to continue his passion for the Fair and its educational programs and build upon the award-winning museums he helped to create,” said Brian I. Tatarian, President of the Friends of the Big Fresno Fair Board.

The Fair has been in constant contact with state and local health officials to review opportunities to continue operations by hosting adapted, innovative events that meet the defined health guidelines of these entities to help keep the community safe. Currently the Fair’s flea market and outdoor satellite wagering facility are operating, while plans to move forward with a drive-thru Fair food event and livestock exhibition in October continue. Additional details will be made available on those activities by September 7.

More information on Friends of the Big Fresno Fair, including how you can get involved and donate to support the Fair can be found online at: www.fresnofair.com/p/about-us/friends-of-the-fair.

About The Big Fresno Fair:

The Big Fresno Fair, founded in 1884, is the fourth largest fair in the state of California and represents the 21st District Agricultural Association. More than 600,000 people from throughout the State visit The Big Fresno Fair each year making it the largest annual event in the Central Valley. Members of the Board of Directors include: Larry Serpa, President; Jerry Pacheco, Vice President; Charles Riojas, Secretary/Treasurer; Leta Ciavaglia; Gabriel Hernandez; Linda Mae Balakian Hunsucker; and Lawrence Salinas. Deputy Managers, Stacy Rianda and Lauri King oversee the daily operations of the Fair. For more information about The Big Fresno Fair, please visit www.FresnoFair.com.





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