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EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION BREAKS ALL-TIME ATTENDANCE RECORD 1,629,527 ATTEND THE 2019 BIG E

A record number of visitors attended the 2019 Big E, in West Springfield, Mass., breaking the Fair's all-time high attendance figure, with a final tally of 1,629,527. The previous record, of 1,543,470, was set in 2018.

During the Fair's run, the all-time highest single day attendance record was also broken when 176,544 visitors attended Saturday, Sept. 21. Five additional daily attendance records were set: Sept. 19, 85,698; Sept. 21, 176,544; Sept. 25, 89,124; Sept. 27, 112,988 and Sept. 28, 173,112.

Eugene J. Cassidy, president and CEO of the Exposition, said, "As our event continues to grow, I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of support we receive, and I want to thank everyone in this region who supports us by attending The Big E! Your support allows our mission of agriculture and education to thrive, to grow, and to have a national impact."

A diverse concert line-up of more than 80 individual performances, 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 Big E Arena, sponsored by *MGM Springfield*, including: AJR; Loverboy; Skillet; Back to the 80s: A Flock of Seagulls, Naked Eyes, and Missing Persons; Sugar Ray; Sesame Street Live; Collective Soul; MGM Presents Carly Rae Jepsen; and Foreigner.

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: Brynn Cartelli; DJ Anomaly; Mariachi Mexico Antiguo; VEO; Bowling for Soup; Blue Öyster Cult; Rave On; The Georgia Satellites; Ambrosia; Lettuce; Xtreme Chinese Acrobats; Up, Up and Away! Starring Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis, Jr.; Scott Stapp, the Voice of Creed; Naughty by Nature; FAT; Collector Car Live, sponsored by *Mark's Auto Parts*, with hosts Mike Brewer of *Wheeler Dealers*, Wayne Carini of *Chasing Classic Cars*, and Barrett Jackson's Steve Mangiani; Atlanta Rhythm Section; John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band; Saraphina Violin; The Original Wailers; Los Lonely Boys; Cautious Clay, DJ Meechie, Matt Maratea, OnCue and Lil TJay; The Artimus Pyle Band; Mason Ramsey and Walker Hayes.

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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; The Big E Circus Spectacular; Mutts Gone Nuts, sponsored by *Leaf Filter Gutter Protection*; Camel Kingdom Presents Sahara, sponsored by *Uncommon USA*; North American Midway Entertainment; Street Performers “ARCY”, Mobile Glass Studio, Soltar the Fortune Teller and more.

This year we celebrated the centennials of The Massachusetts Building, Junior Achievement which was founded by Horace A. Moses on the grounds of ESE, Agri-Mark/Cabot Creamery Co-operative, and 100 years of the West Springfield United Methodist Church feeding youngsters in the Moses 4-H Kitchen.

Ireland’s Dingle Peninsula Showcase brought the Emerald Isle to our fairgoers in a newly expanded and custom-built marketplace. Fourteen exhibitors brought handmade crafted products, the deep diaspora connections of West Springfield and West Kerry, the cultural and educational links of both sides of the Atlantic and the combined rich destinations of both regions.

Delectable Dining

We welcomed new additions to the dining experience in 2019.

New vendors included: Chocolate Moonshine Co., Gertrude’s Pretzel, Hot Wisconsin Cheese, Souper Bowl and Noujaim’s Mediterranean Foods.

New foods for the 2019 Fair included: the BBQ Split from Porky’s Barbeque; the chicken, bacon and cheese Chomper from Chompers; deep fried pineapple upside down cake from the Coffee Break; New Orleans-style brick oven pizzas from The Deep South Company; gourmet flavored frozen or hot chocolate; the V-One Friesling from Craft Cocktails, Inc.; and the Breakfast Cone from the Agawam Lions Club.

Guests also devoured our Big E Cream Puffs, with the new option of chocolate ganache topping, along with our Eclairs, and The Big E Craz-E Burger.

Agriculture

The Eastern States Farmers Market and Wine Barn offered 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, 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 Olivia Oatley, 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 Kody Kishbaugh, of New York and the Highly Commended Steer, raised by Victoria Briggs, of New Hampshire. Overall, twenty five steers were sold for an average of \$2.70/lb.

The ESE Horse Show, sponsored by *Williams Distributing*, featured Hunters and Hunt Seat Equitation, the USHJA Zone I HOTY finals and the \$15,000 Hunter Classic as well as Saddlebreds, Hackneys, Morgans, Friesians and Opportunity Classes. The Big E Draft Horse Show featured the 2019 North American Classic Cart Series Finals, the Haflinger and Hitch Pony Championship series and the \$50,000 Six-Horse Hitch Showdown.

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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 1,940 total entries throughout all contests, judged 232 quilts and had a record 670 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 226K followers on Facebook, more than 12.3K Twitter fans, and 27.7K followers on Instagram. Facebook Live with Julie Harrison, offered a unique look at The Big E each morning and was another huge success this year.

About The Big E

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 17-day event has grown to become the largest fair in the Northeast.

And the tradition continues next fall – September 18 through October 4, 2020. 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 ninth annual Fiber Festival of New England (details at fiberfestival.org), November 2 & 3, or Yuletide at Storrowton, Dec. 7 & 8.

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