

Striking Gold at El Dorado County Fair

Celebration of history and heritage helps economy grow

By Kristi Buffo, for the El Dorado County Fair

Placerville, Ca. (January 10, 2011) – In 2009, the El Dorado County Fair generated nearly \$14 million in economic impact, created 116 jobs and put more than \$3.6 million into the pockets of local residents through salaries and benefits.

“Beyond a celebration of our history and heritage, more than an educational opportunity for youth and wholesome entertainment for families, the El Dorado County Fair provides a huge boost to the local and state economies each year,” says Jody Gray, the Fair’s CEO.

The economic impact of the Fair is part of a new report from the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA), Division of Fairs and Expositions (F&E). The agency oversees California’s 78 fairs to ensure the best use of available funding and other services.

“You can’t put a price tag on the cultural and social benefits provided by California fairs,” says Gray. “These benefits are priceless—like when you’re 10 years old and your prized pig wins a blue ribbon, with all your friends and neighbors cheering you on! But...we can put a dollar sign in front of the Fair’s economic contributions to the county and to the state, and that number is significant.”

According to the CDFA/F&E report, the El Dorado County Fair generated approximately \$13,781,000 in spending activity in 2009 alone, benefiting the local economy and creating a ripple effect of economic benefit for the state.

In 2009, 196,038 people attended fairs and events at the El Dorado County Fair, with fairgoers buying admission tickets, food and other concessions, carnival rides and other products and services. Fair organizers, concessionaires and commercial exhibitors spent money on supplies, lodging, meals and more. These purchases—everything from animal feed, paper products, landscaping materials, graphic design, gasoline, building supplies and produce—boost the local economy by infusing dollars that are spent again by others.

The El Dorado County Fair generates business tax revenue through the collection of state and local sales taxes, transient occupancy taxes, possessory interest taxes, business license taxes and other taxes and fees. These revenues further generate economic activity by providing for programs to benefit the local community. Tax revenues to local and state governments generated by fairs and events held at the El Dorado County Fair in 2009 are estimated at \$147,500.

A number of local organizations use the fair as their major source of fundraising income. American Legion, 20/30 Club, the Consumnes Lodge, Divide Rotary, Emblem Club, Pleasant Valley Grange, and Union Mine Boosters are just a few of the local non-profit organizations that raise much of their annual budgets to fund their community activities by selling food and beverages at the annual fair.

The El Dorado County Fair is a year-round enterprise. Not only is it the host of the County Fair, it is home to many other events and activities such as crab and pasta feeds, the annual 4th of July celebration, 4-H activities, horse shows, fundraisers, weddings, reunions and the new annual Sportsman's Expo. Fairgrounds are also often used as staging sites and rescue locations during floods, fires, earthquakes and other emergencies.

The network of California fairs generates \$2.5 billion dollars annually in economic activity benefiting the local, state and global economy, creates 28,000 jobs and produces about \$136 million in state and local government tax revenues.

For more information call 530-621-5860, email fair@eldoradocountyfair.org, or visit the Fair's website at www.eldoradocountyfair.org.