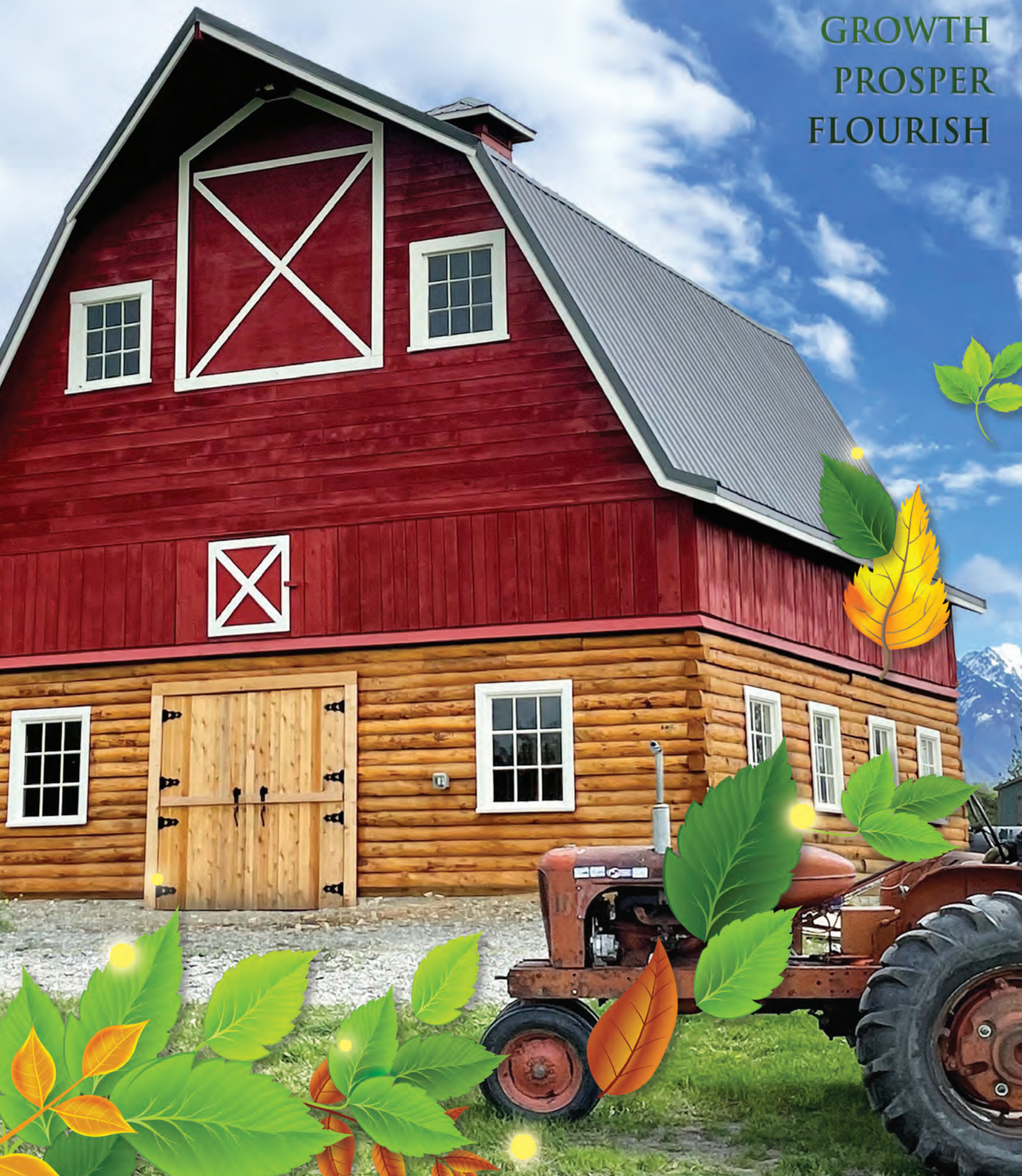


GROWTH
PROSPER
FLOURISH



ALASKA STATE FAIR, INC. | ANNUAL REPORT 2023

A private non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation



Greetings!

It is an honor to write to you in my first annual report welcome message as the CEO of the Alaska State Fair! As many of you know, I joined the Fair in June 2023 after a 25-year career in the events and festival industry. I had the pleasure of overseeing and participating in my first Alaska State Fair last summer – what an incredible experience!

It was wonderful to witness the people of all ages who were drawn here for the great entertainment, carnival rides, animals, events and activities. Equally as impressive was seeing the combined team of talented Fair staff and volunteers and a supportive statewide community.

Beyond the annual event our team works so hard to put on, we are also dedicated to reinvesting our resources into the Fair and community. In the past year, we have focused on providing places and opportunities for the community to come together throughout the year, preserving our historic landmarks, and supporting sustainable agriculture for the future. We share details about these efforts and much more in the following pages of our 2023 annual report.

In closing, I'd like to thank the Fair staff and the Alaska community for welcoming me. I look forward to working together to put on many successful future Fairs, including the exciting event we have planned for 2024.

See you at the Fair!


Jeff Curtis, CEO

Fair Friends,

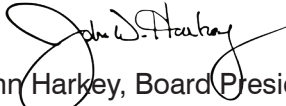
The Alaska State Fair, its mission and its people are near and dear to my heart, and I'm pleased to be able to support its work as a volunteer board member. I've had the honor of serving on the Fair board for eighteen years, including ten as president.

In 2023, we were pleased to welcome Jeff Curtis as the new Fair CEO. Having a strong leader in this role is incredibly important for the success of the Fair, and we are fortunate to have found that in Jeff, who brings decades of valuable experience in event management, sponsorships, sales, marketing and nonprofit administration.

Despite ongoing challenges often posed by inclement weather, it fills my heart with pride to say that fairgoers left our grounds satisfied with their experience—a clear indicator of our Fairs resilience and adaptability.

As we share the highlights of the 2023 Fair with you in this annual report, plans are already well underway for the 2024 Fair, which is scheduled for August 16 – September 2. There is a lot to look forward to and we are excited to share it with you.

Thank you for your support of the Alaska State Fair!


John Harkey, Board President

FAIR STAFF

Jeff Curtis
CEO

Kirsten Mason
Sr. Director of Finance & Ticketing

Kelly Larson
Sr. Director of Community & Corporate Partnerships

Larry Longnecker
Grounds & Maintenance Director

Melissa Keefe (MK)
Director of Marketing & Communications

Jerry Baker
Administrative Services Manager

Suzy Crosby
Entertainment Manager

Sheri Musgrave
Beverage & Events Manager

Anna Rowe
Creative Marketing Manager

Rachel Schoonover
Vendor Manager

Jake Mattes
IT and Systems Manager

Sierra Engler
France Equestrian Center & Grandstand Manager

Becky Myrvold
Head Gardener

Chad Wallace
Grounds Supervisor

Sara Post
Events Coordinator

Lara Stanley
Exhibits Supervisor

Chelsea Dischner
Entertainment Assistant

Kai Tantaros
Administrative Assistant

Donnie Leonard
Maintenance Technician

Randy Leonard
Maintenance Technician

Jason Hitesman
Maintenance Technician

Kyle Williams
Landscaping Assistant

Amy Gilmore
Sponsorship Coordinator

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OUR MISSION

Produce a traditional State Fair which educates and entertains Fairgoers; Provide stable finances through good business practices, statewide outreach, partnerships, and hosting a variety of community, cultural and business events.

OUR VISION

Alaska State Fair Inc. provides a center for the Alaskan community to gather in a dynamic and safe atmosphere throughout the year.



2023 ALASKA STATE FAIR

August 18 – September 4

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

The 2023 daily schedule was once again packed with entertainment options for fairgoers to choose from. New in 2023, Stilt Circus dazzled crowds with their colorful costumes and feats of exceedingly tall skills. As perennial Fair favorites, the Demolition Derby and All Star Monster Truck shows entertained sell-out audiences.

The Gathering Place venue continued to be a hub for performances, demonstrations and vendors focused on showcasing and celebrating Alaska Native culture. Artists, performers, elders, craftspeople and Fair visitors came together to enjoy a wide range of cultural events, including traditional dance performances, interactive storytelling, seal skinning and tasting, Native Youth Olympics competitions, and more.

Up, Up and Away

Fair attendance and concert ticket sales both continued an upward trend in 2023, with attendance growing by nearly 5 percent and concert sales increasing by 7 percent. Fair attendance grew from 340,000 in 2022 to 356,179 in 2023. The 2023 AT&T Concert Series at the ConocoPhillips Borealis Theatre featured 13 acts, including two sold-out shows.

2023 Concert Line-Up:

- Turnpike Troubadours
- Noah Kahan – SOLD OUT
- FOR KING + COUNTRY
- Foghat
- Flogging Molly
- Nate Bargatze
- Home Free
- Yung Gravy – SOLD OUT
- J Boog
- Killswitch Engage
- The String Cheese Incident
- Little River Band
- Noah Cyrus

DOING GOOD TOGETHER

As the state's largest event, the Fair has a big opportunity to make a big difference. Each year, through efforts like our recycling program and food drive, we strive to do just that!

In 2023, the Alaska State Fair Recycles initiative collected 36.2 tons of aluminum, plastic, paper, steel and cardboard. Since 2002, recycling efforts at the Fair have diverted 424.9 tons of material from the landfill. These efforts are made possible by Crowley, Valley Community for Recycling Solutions, and Alaska Waste.

At last year's Fair, generous fairgoers also donated a total of 4,334 pounds of shelf-stable food items for the Mat-Su Food Bank.

We would like to thank our long-time carnival partner, Golden Wheel Amusements, for the years of joy they've brought to our Fairgoers.





RAISING EXPECTATIONS

Each year, 4-H and FFA youth dedicate their time to raising animals for the 4-H & FFA Junior Market Livestock Auction. And each year, they continue to exceed expectations! Continuing a record-setting trend, the 2023 auction featured the sale of 107 animals and raised \$510,000, exceeding last year's \$419,957 fundraising total.



REMOTE AND REMARKABLE

Each year, we celebrate individuals who are making a difference by making a living as farmers in Alaska. In partnership with the Department of Natural Resources Division of Agriculture and Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union, the Fair honored Bo Varsano and Marja Smets as the 2023 Farm Family of the Year.

Bo and Marja own and operate Farragut Farm, located in the remote Farragut Bay, approximately 35 miles by boat north of Petersburg. Bo and Marja farm vegetable crops using organic methods and use a 27-foot catamaran to bring their produce to market, taking four to five hours to make the trip from Farragut Bay to Petersburg!



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR AMBASSADORS

We continued our Fair Ambassador Program, which recognizes and involves our most loyal supporters! Chayce Hagelberger and Jessica Herbert were selected as our 2023 Fair Ambassadors.

Exhibiting Greatness

Fairgoers showed off their diverse talents and interests in exhibit entries, which increased in 2023, with 2,011 exhibitors submitting 7,506 entries in departments including livestock, poultry, flowers, sewing, art, quilts, fiber and many more.

Crops exhibitors displayed the fruits of their labor at the 2023 Fair, setting four new state records:

- 17 1/4" Hot Pepper - D. Blaylock, Palmer, AK
- 28 1/2" Leak - T. Phillips, Palmer, AK
- 2.18 lb Rhubarb - R. Francisco, Anchorage, AK
- 5.58 lb Horseradish - E. Mielke, Wasilla, AK

A 113-pound cabbage earned top honors at the 27th Annual Giant Cabbage Weigh-Off, and a 2,023.5-pound pumpkin took first place in the 17th Alaska's Midnight Sun Great Pumpkin Weigh-Off presented by Alaska Division of Ag & Alaska Grown.

- 27th Annual Giant Cabbage Weigh-Off:
- 1st Place: 113 lb - S. Robb, Palmer, AK
 - 2nd Place: 71.55 lb - C. Kenley, Palmer, AK
 - 3rd Place: 69 lb - B. Shunskis, Salcha, AK

- 17th Alaska's Midnight Sun Great Pumpkin Weigh-Off:
- 1st Place: 2023.5 lb - D. Marshall, Anchorage, AK
 - 2nd Place: 620.5 lb - K. Malone, Palmer, AK
 - 3rd Place: 283 lbs - T. Phillips, Palmer, AK

REINVESTING - OUR - RESOURCES

Sluicebox

As a nonprofit organization, we focus on reinvesting our resources into the Fair and the community. In 2023, we completed construction of the brand new 7,000-square-foot Sluicebox. For over 40 years the Sluicebox has been a place where friends gather to visit, hoist a glass of beer, and listen to an eclectic mix of their favorite local bands from across the state and top-notch bands from around the country. We embraced elements of the past in the new building while creating a larger, safe space to entertain. We're excited for another 40 years of fun! This facility will continue to develop into a rentable community space in the future.

Rebarchek Agricultural Farm

We also continued efforts to restore the historic Rebarchek Farm. Developed by original colony farmers Ray and Edna Rebarchek, the farm is one of the first colonist farms in the Mat-Su Valley and is on the National Register of Historic places. As owners of the property, our goal is to preserve the history of agriculture in Alaska and the Mat-Su Valley, provide agricultural education for youth and our community, and support sustainable agriculture today and in the future.

In 2023, the farmhouse received a historically accurate stucco replacement, making it fully restored for community visits and education. The original well-house, with intact interior sauna, was also rehabilitated to serve as a farm information center. Through these efforts and more, Rebarchek Farm is now available as a meeting and event space, offering a beautiful setting true to its agricultural heritage.

2023 Rebarchek Highlights:

- *More than 1,000 people attended various agricultural training and education programs.*
- *Hosted popular annual potato planting and harvest events, featuring games, Antique Power Club demonstrations, wagon rides and more.*
- *4-H youth raised goats and turkeys for the Junior Market Livestock Auction.*
- *Hazelnut demonstration grove planted as part of the experimental crop initiative.*
- *Began testing native plant nursery to support using indigenous plants for restoration, pollination support, reclamation and cultural heritage programs.*



Thank you to the following for their contributions to Rebarchek Agricultural Farm:

Antique Power Club of Alaska
Mat-Su Health Foundation
Rasmuson Foundation
Alaska State Historic Preservation Office
Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District
Knik Tribal Council
Vannoy Electric
H Construction

Sheri Hamming
Richard Esteel
Sharon Hein & Rod Rongstad
Mat-Su Borough & Mat-Su Borough School District
Brenda and Troy Sheldon
Elena Prisekin
Lena Construction - Jusif Lena

YEAR-ROUND AROUND THE GROUNDS

Holiday Bazaar

The fairgrounds hosts numerous popular events throughout the year, including the Holiday Bazaar in October, featuring more than 100 vendors plus food trucks and a visit from Santa.

Mighty Monster BooFest

The Halloween-time Mighty Monster BooFest, endorsed by the Brewers Guild of Alaska, gives beer-lovers the opportunity to sample brews from across Alaska and around the world, while enjoying a range of food and live music.

Bright Up the Night

The year culminates with Bright Up the Night, Alaska's largest drive-through holiday light display, presented by ConocoPhillips Alaska. From the warmth and comfort of their vehicles, 4,805 vehicles drove through festive light displays spanning the entire length of the fairgrounds while enjoying the holiday music broadcast synced directly to their radio.



SEEDS OF WISDOM

Each year, immediately after the Fair ends, the Fair's head gardener begins planning for the next year's gardens. "Seed and plant orders need to be in by November, so basic ideas have to be in my head by then," shared Becky Myrvoid. "Once the seeds arrive, from companies all over the world, designing begins."



Growing Numbers

Each year at the Fair you can find about 45,000 plants, most grown from seed!

- 41,000 flowers
- 4,000 herbs
- 478 flower varieties
- 130 herb varieties
- 83 whiskey barrel flower displays
- 81 hanging baskets
- 3 main gardens

Visit the Fair Gardens

- Millie's Garden highlights approximately 1,000 herbs, flowers and vegetables that can be grown in southcentral Alaska
- Virgil Eckert Memorial Garden features an herb display
- Perennial Garden showcases the wide variety of perennials that can be grown in Alaska

Be sure to visit Pioneer Plaza at the 2024 Fair for a grand garden surprise!

2023 SPONSORS

Alaska State Fair

TOTE
AT&T
ConocoPhillips Alaska
Craig Taylor Equipment
Alaska Airlines
MTA
Matanuska Valley Federal
Credit Union
Alaska Metal Mines
Mattress Firm
N C Machinery
Coca-Cola Bottling of Alaska
Southcentral Foundation
Gorilla Fireworks
AARP
Alaska Oil and Gas Association
Alaska's Hottest Hits 92.9 KFAT
Channel 2 & CBS 5
University of Alaska Anchorage
Alaskan Brewing Co.
GCI
The End. Alaska's Alternative
Rock 94.7
Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.
Credit Union 1
Over the Top Rentals
Pacific Seafood Processors Assn.
Spenard Builders Supply
Frontiersman, Anchorage Press,
& Alaska Native Quarterly
Kool 97.3 The Greatest Hits
of the 70's & 80's
Alaska DNR Division of Agriculture
Classic Country 100.9
KAFC 93.7
Alliance Highway Safety
Alaska's Rock 106.5 KWHL
Mix 103.1
Global Credit Union

K-Bear 104.1 Alaska's Hottest Country
The WonderPax
Mat-Su College
Valley Radio Q99.7, The Voice of the Valley
Crowley Fuels Alaska
Sierra Nevada
Alaska 529
Alaska Public Media
Carrs Safeway
102.1 Classic Hits of the 80's and More
Lynden Transport
Mat-Su Valley Cancer Center
Triple D Hatchery
Raven Homeschool
Mountain Fork Brewery
Arize Entertainment
Belle a Vie
Coors Light
K-HITZ 107.1, Your Valley, Your Music, Your Station
Image Home Furnishings
Bud Light
Verizon
KNLT
River Valley Group & Key Realty Group,
brokered by eXp Realty
Classic Toys
Alaska Waste Management
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights
Mat-Su Regional Medical Center
Switchboard IT
Providence Imaging Center
Combs Insurance
Pioneer Equipment
Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska
Anchorage Daily News
Dairy Queen
Vet Tix

Bright Up the Night

ConocoPhillips Alaska
TOTE
Lynden
MTA
Alaska Airlines
KTUU Channel 2 & CBS 5
Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union
Magic 98.9

Sponsor Spotlight:

MATANUSKA VALLEY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

In 2023, the Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union (MVFCU) celebrated its 75th anniversary, marking a significant milestone in its history. Since 2000, MVFCU has been a proud sponsor of the Farm Family of the Year, an initiative that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of families in the agricultural sector. Their support extends to the Kids Zone, which has hosted a variety of educational exhibits, including Brad's World Reptiles, the Glow Zone featuring bioluminescent fish and plants, and exhibits showcasing rescued wildlife.

MVFCU has also sponsored the Green Trail, a commitment that has spanned the past three years. They have been instrumental in providing main entertainment in the Channel 2 & CBS 5 Corral, which includes popular attractions such as the Racing Pigs, Dock Dogs, and Canine Stars.

In addition, since 2020, MVFCU has been lighting up the holiday season with the Bright Up the Night holiday light display. Their partnership has been invaluable to the Fair and the community, demonstrating their commitment to supporting local initiatives and fostering a sense of community spirit. We look forward to continuing this fruitful partnership in the years to come.



STAND-OUT STUDENTS

The Fair received a total of 56 applications for our 2023 scholarships, which are awarded each year to Alaska high school students planning to attend college or vocational school. From the impressive pool of applicants, we selected six students from communities across the state to receive 2023 scholarships totaling \$8,000. Please join us in congratulating our 2023 scholarship recipients:

- 1st Place (\$3,000): Owen Saltzman, Anchorage
- 2nd Place (\$2,000): Cassidy Williams, Eagle River
- 3rd Place (\$1,500): Janae Manley, Palmer
- Honorable mention (\$500): Alana Lim, Anchorage
- Honorable mention (\$500): Heather Swartz, Wasilla
- Honorable mention (\$500): Shea Post, Juneau



LOOKING FORWARD



2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Rebarchek Ag Classes
Throughout the year

Stallions of the North
June 2

2024 Alaska State Fair
"Enjoy the Ride"
August 16 - September 2

Holiday Bazaar
October 12 - 13 & October 19 - 20

Mighty Monster Boo Fest
October 26

Bright Up the Night
November - December, exact dates TBD

Free Parking in 2024

General parking will once again be free for fairgoers at the 2024 Fair! Efforts to relieve traffic congestion and expedite parking were well-received last year and, with highway improvements along the Glenn Highway continuing this summer, we will continue to waive the parking fee at the 2024 Fair. Free on-site general parking will be available in the purple, red, yellow and brown parking lots on a first-come, first-served basis each day of the Fair. Premier parking and camping will continue to be offered for a fee.

(907) 745-4827

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