

ARAPAHOE COUNTY FAIR



2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

Today's Overview:

- 1.) Staff will present key operational changes to the 2026 Fair
- 2.) Request: Board approval to implement staff recommended changes



2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

Planning Process:

- ❖ August 14th tabletop to begin strategizing and researching options
 - Participants included: Communications, CSU Extension, Open Spaces
 - Gini Pingnot, Matt Bixenman, Lexy Kingsbaker, Jeff Hester, Dan Payson, Brenda Lucero, Michelle Halstead, Chris Henning, Jordan Ames, Lizzie Mayer, Dina Baker, Sara Overby, Lindsey Friend, Jessica Hites, Meagan Perks
- ❖ 4 workgroups met over 6 weeks (mid-August to early October) to explore pros/cons of various approaches
- ❖ October 1st reconvening of above participants to share findings and identify consensus recommendations



2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

Staff Recommendations:

- 1.) Gate Model & Fair Pricing: Sustain the historic pay one price model and increase gate entry ticket to \$30 per person (\$34 with Fees.
- 2.) Fair Hours: Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)
- 3.) Pours on the Plains: Eliminating Pours on the Plains & creating new entertainment activation

2026 COUNTY FAIR PLAN

For each recommendation:

- ❖ Background Slide(s)
- ❖ Options Discussed
 - Pros & Cons/Considerations



GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING



BACKGROUND: FAIR BY NUMBERS

Financial Summary

Year	Revenue	Expense	Loss	Cost Recovery
2022	\$800,234	\$876,020	\$ (75,876)	91.35%
2023	\$929,138	\$956,673	\$ (27,535)	97.12%
2024	\$947,179	\$999,321	\$ (52,143)	94.78%
2025 (YTD)	\$981,142*	\$1,064,130	\$ (82,988)	92.20%
Est. 2026**	\$1,010,576	\$1,133,298	\$ (122,722)	89.17%

Fair Attendance

	2022 Fair	2023 Fair	2024 Fair	2025 Fair	24' vs 25' Comparison
Thursday	1,600	2,438	2,181	2,262	4%
Friday	6,844	5,746	6,574	6,390	-3%
Saturday	11,331	10,802	9,654	10,830	11%
Sunday	7,369	6,662	6,691	6,947	4%
Total	27,144	25,648	25,100	26,429	5%

*Excludes one-time transfer and grant monies of \$118,472

** Estimate based on 3% revenue growth factor and 6.5% expense growth factor (matching 2024 to 2025)

BACKGROUND: FAIR BY NUMBERS

Ticket Price History

	Ticket	Saffire Ticket Fees	CC Processing	Fee Total	Total Ticket Price
2022	\$20	\$2	\$1	\$3	\$23
2023	\$25	\$2	\$1	\$3	\$28
2024	\$25	\$2	\$1	\$3	\$28
2025	\$25	\$2	\$1	\$3	\$28

* Note: Proposed 2026 increase in ticket price to \$30 will result in a \$4 fee (\$3 Saffire/ticket fee + \$1 CC processing) fee.

Saffire Ticket Fees

Online/Print at Home Tickets		Purchased at Gate Tickets	
TICKET PRICE	FEE	TICKET PRICE	FEE
\$0-\$5.00	\$0.75	ALL	\$0.25
\$5.01 - \$10.00	\$1.00		
\$10.01 - \$15.00	\$1.50		
\$15.01 - \$25.00	\$2.00		
\$25.01 - \$40.00	\$3.00		
\$40.00 - \$50.00	\$4.00		
\$50.01 & up	\$5.00		



GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING

❖ Staff explored the pros and cons of **two** options:

- 1.) Sustain the historic pay one price model & increase gate entry ticket to \$30 per person.
- 2.) Separate gate entry ticket: recommended to be no more than \$10 by carnival vendor (current share is \$12.50 per ticket) & Carnival Wristband fee (upwards of \$40/person).



FAIR TICKET PRICING

#1: One Ticket Price - \$30

Ticket Price Options	Additional Rev	Rounded Loss
\$25 + Processing & Credit Card Fees	-	\$ (83,000)*
\$26 + Processing & Credit Card Fees	\$12,627	\$(70,373)
\$27 + Processing & Credit Card Fees	\$25,254	\$(57,746)
\$28 + Processing & Credit Card Fees	\$37,881	\$(45,119)
\$29 + Processing & Credit Card Fees	\$50,508	\$(32,492)
\$30 + Processing & Credit Card Fees	\$63,135	\$(19,865)

*\$83,000 is the rounded loss from the County's 2025 fair (see slide 7)

Take Home:

- Every \$1 increase will provide \$.50 per ticket to the county
- $(\$0.50 \times 25,254^* = \$12,627)$ additional revenue to cover the deficit)

*The county comps roughly 500 tickets/year through redeemed sponsorships & Boots Not Suits.



GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING

#1: One Ticket Price - \$30

Pros

- Unique (only Fair in Colorado that has free carnival rides with entry ticket!)
- Amazing value - \$40 Carnival Wristband Value/ Rodeo/ Concert / Heritage Hall/ Fireworks and More!
- Greater financial transparency
 - County calculates ticket revenue split
 - Carnival calculates food/game revenue split

Cons

- Increasing ticket price.
- Budget cuts still necessary - \$30/ticket only covers 75% of 2025 shortfall
- Non-riding carnival fairgoers still pay same price

GATE MODEL & FAIR PRICING

#2: Gate Ticket \$10 and Carnival Ticket \$40 (Unlimited Rides) Example

🔗 \$10 ticket + \$3 Processing fees + Separate Carnival Wristband Share	
Revenue	
Fair Tickets Redeemed	25,000
Fair Tickets Sold	26,000
Price per entry ticket	\$13
Total Proceeds from Tickets	\$338,000.00
Total Ride Wristbands Purchased - 35% of redeemed	6,250
Price of Wristband	\$40
	\$250,000
30% Share of Ride Wristbands	\$75,000
Total Carnival/Gate Revenue Estimate	\$413,000
Other Revenue (Sponsorship, Food & Bev, Etc)	260,000
Gen Fund Transfer/ Employee Ticket 627 in '25	6,270
Total Revenue Estimate	679,270
Expenses	
2026 Estimated Expenses (3% over 2025 actual)	720,470
Processing Fees	20,000
Total Estimated Fair Expenses	740,470
Net Profit/(Loss)	(61,200)

Pros

- Reduce Carnival payment from budget. Est \$700,000 budget vs \$1,000,000 budget
- Al a carte options
 - \$40 Unlimited Ride Wristband and Pay per ride options

Cons

- If carnival experience is important, county to pay for up to \$50 (carnival wristband + gate fee) for employee, comp tickets, and Boots not Suits ticket.
- Any gate ticket higher than \$10 could deter fairgoers due to overall higher expense.
- More complicated communication to fairgoers.
- Learning curve for fair patrons, transition year.
- Projected \$61,200 shortfall

FAIR DAYS/HOURS



BACKGROUND: FAIR DAYS/HOURS

Fair Hours History

	2023 Hours	2024 Hours	2025 Hours
Thursday	4pm-midnight	4pm-midnight	4pm-midnight
Friday	4pm-midnight	11am-midnight	11am-midnight
Saturday	11am-midnight	11am-midnight	11am-midnight
Sunday	11am-10:30	11am-10:30	11am-10:30



FAIR DAYS/HOURS

❖ Staff explored the pros and cons of **two** options:

- 1.) Removing or Adding Days to Fair
- 2.) Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)



FAIR DAYS/HOURS

#1 Removing or Adding Days to Fair

❖ Considerations discussed on the length of Fair:

- Spreading out weather risk
- Potential increase in attendance/revenue
- Ability to move Boots not Suits
- Additional operational expenses
 - Entertainment, Staffing, Security, Equipment Rental etc.
- Wear and tear on County staff



FAIR HOURS/DAYS

#2 Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)

Pros

- Reduced programming gaps
- Less wear and tear on staff (15-20% reduction in total fair hours)
- Saved expenses on:
 - Contracted Staff (roughly \$8,000 in savings)
 - County Staff (roughly \$12,000 in savings)
- Help avoid high temps during the heat of the day (average temps 86.5 to 88 degrees)

	2025 Hours	2026 Hours
Thursday	4pm-midnight	4pm-midnight
Friday	11am-midnight	2pm-midnight
Saturday	11am-midnight	2pm-midnight
Sunday	11am-10:30	2pm-midnight



FAIR HOURS/DAYS

#2 Modify start times for Friday, Saturday and Sunday to 2pm (rather than 11am)

Tickets Sold between 11am-2pm

	2023 Fair	2024 Fair	2025 Fair
	11am-2pm	11am-2pm	11am-2pm
Thursday	N/A	N/A	N/A
Friday	N/A	1,157	949
Saturday	2,067	1,987	2,037
Sunday	1,808	1,806	1,698
Total	3,875	4,950	4,684

Cons

- Potential loss of revenue from tickets sales from 11-2 pm on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (4,684 x \$25 = \$115,000 Worst Case Scenario)

POURS ON THE PLAINS





BACKGROUND: POURS ON THE PLAINS

Total cost to attendee: \$50

Pours on the Plains Financial Summary

	Revenue	Expenses	Net Loss
2023	9,763.00	11,162.92	-1,399.92
2024	12,204.00	13,989.46	-1,785.46
2025	8,256.00	11,468.66	-3,212.66

Pours on the Plains – Ticket Sales

	Redeemed	Sold/Comp	DD Tickets
2021	383	569	20
2022	359	541	16
2023	345	498	1
2024	246	402	4
2025	242	386	5

*Since the pandemic, Colorado has lost **140 craft breweries**, including **41 closures in 2024** and **35 in 2023**. Overall, beer sales in the state declined by **3.2% in 2024**, which was worse than the national average of -2% for craft beer.



POURS ON THE PLAINS

❖ Staff explored the pros and cons of **two** options:

- 1.) Eliminating and creating indoor seating cooling space
- 2.) Eliminating and creating new entertainment activation



POURS ON THE PLAINS

#1 Eliminating and creating indoor seating cooling space

Pros

- Option to save entertainment activation budget
- Creates indoor space to cool down
- No operational oversight
- Ride Share logistics and cost decrease
- No late flip of facility

Cons

- Disappoint beer fans*
- Dead space

* Staff looking at expanding beer options at existing beer tents



POURS ON THE PLAINS

#2 Eliminating and creating entertainment activation

- ❖ Replace with something like an indoor, all ages, roller skating event

Pros

- Creates indoor space to cool down
- Small operational oversight
- No late flip of facility
- Space made available to all fairgoers
- Eliminate comp tickets

Cons

- New concept and lack of staff familiarity
- Waiver process
- Depending on pricing model a budget impact may occur

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OTHER CHANGES IN STORE FOR 2026 FAIR

Other Operational Updates:

- 1.) Credit Card Processor: update to increase security and payment options. (Apple/Google Pay)
- 2.) 120/150/250 Celebration: Efforts and Ideas



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

