



Have You Heard?

Yreka Fair CEO Rebecca Desmond Heads for Sacramento as the Division of Fairs and Expositions' New Assistant Director

As Rebecca Desmond settled into her new role at the Division of Fairs and Expositions (F&E), Christina Rueck, a legislative analyst with F&E had the opportunity to talk to her about a few of her past experiences as well as some goals she's already set for herself.

Among her many duties as F&E's assistant director, Rebecca will provide fiscal and policy oversight for California's fair network. She'll also oversee the legislative unit at F&E, and will assist with fair programs and professional development for fair staff.

Prior to her recent return to Sacramento, a place she called home for a short time in her youth, Rebecca was CEO at the Siskiyou Golden Fair for more than 10 years. A dedicated fair advocate, Rebecca has held elected positions within nearly every fair organization and association in California. Not only that, she's also attended 34 fairs and visited more than 40 California fairgrounds. What fair event entertains her most? Pee Wee Showmanship! Not a surprising answer since Rebecca's first fair experience was showing a 4-H hog at age 11, followed by seven years as a Junior Livestock exhibitor.

Rebecca attended California State University, Chico, earnir a bachelor's degree in Journalism and a master's in Political Science. Before entering the fair industry, she was editor of the Siskiyou newspaper for many years. Her years in the fair industry, Rebecca said, have taught her a lot, including the value of hiring top-notch people and then giving them the space and opportunity to do their jobs. Most importantly, Rebecca continued, she learned that fairs are an asset

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Mexicali Earthquake Puts the Imperial Valley Expo Center on Stand-by at the Epicenter of Relief Efforts

(As this newsletter goes to print, aftershocks from the Mexicali Earthquake are still shaking the ground and garnering on-the-spot guesses from Expo Center staff as to the shocks' magnitude.)

Theresa Garcia, interim CEO for the Imperial Valley Expo Center, reports that thanks to the quick response of Sacramento's fair agencies to the earthquake that happened a little over two weeks ago, she and her staff of three have been able to provide relief services as needed for their immediate community as well as international relief for Mexico.

The quake hit on the afternoon of Easter Sunday and measured a magnitude of 7.2. Although Theresa was out of town, she was able to have her fair's maintenance worker get to the fairgrounds for a preliminary damage assessment. Theresa also immediately heard from Mike Treacy, director of the Division of Fairs and Expositions (F&E), who offered assistance from Sacramento.

By Monday, the California Construction Authority (CCA) had sent Inspector Phil Smith to the fairgrounds to conduct

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Shopping for Display & Decorating Materials? Call CFSA: Save 50%

When shopping for display and decorating materials (corrugated display wraps, seasonal kits, honeycomb and metallic decorations and more) for your fair, be sure to check out the latest Bemiss-Jason catalog. Why? Because when you make a catalog order through CFSA, you'll get 50% off catalog prices!

If you attended the recent FAST Conference and stopped by CFSA's Research Lab booth, you'll find a catalog in your CFSA information folder. If you'd like a catalog or wish to place an order, call Cailee DeFoe at CFSA: 916/263-6191.

Attention Fair Managers and Fair Business Assistants Help Your Staff Save for Retirement with the Savings Plus Program

Now, for a limited time only, the Savings Plus Program has reduced its minimum monthly contribution to just \$25.00.

The Savings Plus Program (SPP) offers both a 401(k) Plan and a 457 Plan to eligible State of California employees enabling them to build a retirement

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WFA to Host First-Ever New CEO Orientation, May 20 - 21, 2010

Western Fairs Association has invited new fair CEOs and their fair board presidents to Sacramento for two days — Thursday and Friday — of informative sessions and industry peer networking. The Orientation, funded by the Division of Fairs and Expositions,

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"Knowledge is power and power is hilarious."

~ Dr. Steele



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Let's hear from you!
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"Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes."
~ Author Unknown

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Rebecca Desmond, continued . . .

to their communities and she hopes that her new position will give her a platform to further that message.

As F&E's new assistant director, Rebecca looks forward to learning more about the fair industry as a whole, while integrating new ways for F&E to better assist the fairs in meeting their individual goals.

It also turns out that fairs have played a role in Rebecca's home life too. She met her husband Patrick while working at the San Mateo County Fair back when it was known as the San Mateo Exposition Center and Floral Fiesta. Today, the Desmonds, including daughter Ellie; two border collies, Gabrielle and Artie; and cat, Little One are in the process of relocating to the Sacramento area. Rebecca noted that she is especially looking forward to shortening her 295 mile commute between Siskiyou County and F&E's office.

Looking forward to finding new opportunities in 2010, Rebecca hopes to help California fairs in every way she can. Her first piece of advice for the fairs? "Be innovative!"

Imperial Valley Expo, continued . . .

a thorough damage assessment. By Tuesday, Phil had secured a structural engineer to follow through with an even more in-depth inspection and it was at this time that the facilities were cleared for occupancy: No serious damage was found. (Note: the grandstand was built in the 1940s as a bomb shelter and although a few cracks were noted, the structure was deemed safe.)

Theresa emphasizes that it was the quick response of CCA's inspectors that helped put the fairgrounds in a position to become an emergency supply staging center. To date, the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA), the Red Cross, and the Fire Department have been on-site to coordinate the transportation of relief supplies into Mexico.

Fairground staff have also become critical components of the relief effort. Theresa was a contact person for relief supplies and transportation efforts; her maintenance worker worked non-stop with the fair's forklift to off load and reload supplies; and a part-time employee, forklift certified through CFSA, assisted on a rented fork lift. (CFSA has also offered to help the fairground acquire more fork lifts if needed.)

Theresa reported, "It feels like pre-fair set up, with all the intensity of many people trying to accomplish critical, but unfamiliar tasks such as getting supplies across the border. The only challenge is that aftershocks have continued so nerves are frayed and sleep is limited."

Because of the ongoing aftershocks, Theresa believes the fairgrounds may be part of a long-term relief effort. There are still schools and hospitals in the county that have not been able to reopen, and agencies like the Red Cross and Cal EMA may need office space for a longer-term presence. In addition, Calexico is in danger of losing its water supply due to aftershocks and suitable space for water storage may be necessary.

Continued in next column . . .

Savings Plus, continued . . .

savings account using automatic pre-tax payroll deductions. For more information on eligibility, the program itself or to enroll, call 866/566-4777 to speak to a customer service representative.

Beginning May 8 you may enroll online at: www.sppforu.com.

Now that you know about this limited time offer, pass it on to fair staff who aren't already participating in the Savings Plus Program.

Orientation, continued . . .

includes meetings with representatives from Western Fairs Association and the California Fairs Alliance, the Division of Fairs and Expositions, California Construction Authority, and California Fair Services Authority, all of whom will share overviews of their organizations, their missions and how fairs can make best use of their services. On Friday, May 21, the group travels downtown for a private tour of California's State Capitol.

Imperial Valley, continued . . .

The team at the Imperial Valley Expo Center is learning, on their feet and without much sleep, the complexities of emergency response and relief efforts.

"Luckily, we have the support and resources that F&E, CCA and CFSA bring to help this small fair play a big role in meeting the emergency needs of the Imperial Valley and Mexico following this earthquake disaster," Theresa said. "I look forward to the day I no longer sleep in my shoes and can take the time to thank everyone!"