

“What/Who Inspires You?” will be a regular feature in *Fairs & Expos* magazine during 2023. The theme Fairs Rise was chosen for the 2023 Convention and will be incorporated into all IAFE activities throughout the year. Each letter stands for something very important about our fairs:

**R** – Reunite: How many days does your fair bring your community together?

**I** – Inspire: Who or what inspires you as a person and as an event organizer?

**S** – Support: What is the scholarship dollar amount your fair contributes to your community?

**E** – Educate: What is the number of youth that are impacted by the education that your fair provides, through tours, events, and education?

Throughout the year, we will be asking you to share what inspires you. Want to share now? Here is a QR code – you can follow the link and share your inspiration. Maybe you will be featured in the next issue of *Fairs & Expos*.



# What/Who Inspires You?

*My Marketing team inspires me! To see the passion and commitment that comes from them along with always injecting ideas into meetings inspires me to be better. Most are younger, but they bring a new outlook to the industry and a different perspective that wants me to continue to learn, change and be fluid with my decisions. So, I would have to say my team inspires me to continue to grow and to never settle.*

**Chris Derby**  
San Antonio Rodeo Marketing

We just had the opportunity to host our Fair for the first time since 2019. We had a predominantly new team, other than our Ops team which was the one thing that saved us. The inspiration I took was from a new and old perspective:

## New

- Massive change in demographics at our Fair. London has had a large growth in ethnicity over the past three years, and it was evident that they chose to give us a chance to entertain them.
- For the first time we saw LBGTQ representation and same sex couples feeling safe, invited and welcome at our site. This was also a major change for the better.
- New layout and orientation of our event was a risk, but was widely accepted and loved.

## Old

- We do what we do because we get to see and hear the joy on kids faces when they get to see new, exciting and unexpected things. The smiles and laughter are the fuel that keep us

going throughout the long hours over multiple days.

- This year my daughter decided to join our team for the event, working a less than glorious job and loving every minute of it. She has helped me mark out the Midway since she was 10 years old, and I see clearly how that has had a positive effect on her and me.
- The commitment of my team and their inability to quit or slow down despite the size or scope or craziness of any idea brought forward is rewarding and appreciative. A Fair takes an entire team, and I wouldn't trade my team for anyone else's.

**Rob Lumsden**  
Western Fair

*I am inspired by my children. I want to instill a strong work ethic, passion for life and kindness for their neighbor in each of them. And each day, I motivated to live and lead as an example of these pillars. Lucky for me that I work in an industry which embodies those pillars also.*

**Andrea Thayer, CFE,**  
Washington State Fair

Inspiration to me takes on many meanings. I can't put into words one thing that inspires me as it's multiple pieces that have molded me into who I am today and what I want to work towards in the future. Like most people, my past defines me. Difficulties, along with all my successes, inspire me to work through the tough times that we all face in the fair industry and appreciate all the successes that motivates us to

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keep going. I also want to add that I am always looking to do better; to be a good role model for people because I had the best role model to step into in the fair industry. I was fortunate enough to follow in my mom's footsteps and take over our annual fair. She inspired me every day by her hard work and dedication to her co-workers, to her board, and to the community around her. It was the happiness and cohesiveness that was created then, and still continues to this day at our fair, that inspires me to always do better, face challenges head on, and smile at the successes. What a great industry we work in!

**Amy Olson, CFE**  
**Grant County Fairgrounds**

*Our Fairs are inspiring, in and of themselves, in that a single event has the power, via the passion it instills, to draw people in from the local area and from across the country to attend, to exhibit, to vend, to work, to volunteer. The yield of a Fair is the passion of its people, and that is inspiring.*

**Janet Schutter**  
**Clay County Fair**

I'm inspired by thoughtful and passionate friends with kindness that's contagious!

**Kady Porterfield, CFE**  
**Kittitas Valley Event Center**

*Our volunteers are some of my biggest sources of inspiration. They never cease to amaze me with their selflessness and passion for what they do. Seeing their smiles and dedication motivates me to do the best job I can. It's so encouraging to witness the impact they have on our fair year after year!*

**Kristen Bright, IFMG**  
**Tennessee Valley Fair**

There are many people who inspire me and for me to pick just one would be unfair. My inspiration comes from those around me that maintain a positive outlook and have a passion for life. They are enthusiastic in all they do and aim to make a difference without taking credit. I am inspired by those that stand their ground and handle difficult situations with compassion. They believe in themselves and have self-confidence. All of these are just some of the ways that people in my life inspire me every day!

**Jennifer Giesike, CFE**  
**Washington Town & Country Fair**

*I feel like I find new inspiration every year, but most recently: While planning the 2021 Fair, I was having trouble staying focused and was worried about the uncertainty of the upcoming year. I was asked to speak to a local group in town that*

*focuses on seniors, and I just knew they'd have some tough questions for me especially since COVID numbers were still up. I prepared myself with every possible response, but when we got to the Q&A, not one person asked me a question. Instead, the entire room shared their favorite fair memory. I got to my car after and was in tears. That meeting reminded me of why we do what we do. We are making memories that last a lifetime.*

**Kelly Collins, CFE**  
**State Fair of West Virginia**



I'm inspired by our volunteer Fair Board. They are a very hands-on, boots-on-the-ground board that plays hard but works harder. Many of them burn their vacation days from their "real jobs" to run their tails off at our Fair . . . for 9 years (or sometimes 12)!

**Amanda Griesheimer**  
**Washington Town & Country Fair**

*What inspires me is seeing and feeling the energy of a packed Grandstand show! Thousands of fans jumping, screaming, and singing along to their favorite songs; for me, nothing compares to that!*

**Julian Schadeck**  
**Minnesota State Fair**

The members of this association inspire me daily. I love seeing all of their accomplishments and strive to be a leader like them in all that I do with my fair. I especially enjoy our meetings and meet-ups, as they refill my cup and keep me going, as I know/see that what we are doing really does matter.

**Angela Miller**  
**Roosevelt County Fair**