

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Ventura County Fairgrounds
31st District Agricultural Association - 10 W. Harbor Blvd. - Ventura, CA 93001 - (805) 648-3376
Website: venturacountyfair.org Contact: Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Tuesday, July 21st, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
Ventura County Fairgrounds – Derby Club

I. Call to Order

Roll Call

Declaration of Recusal or Conflict of Interest

The meeting convened at 9:05 a.m. and called to order by President Ceja.

Directors present: President, Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja Jr., Vice President, Gloria Martinez, Betsy Chess, Leah Lacayo, Dan Long, Miriam Mack, and Shanté Morgan-Carter.

Absent: Leslie Cornejo

Staff present: Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Jason Amelio, Deputy Manager, Emilee Inez, Exhibit Supervisor, Megan Hook, PR & Marketing, and Karen Pineda, Executive Assistant.

Guests Present: None

Director Mack disclosed a conflict of interest and recused herself from item X, Consent Agenda, due to her involvement with an organization listed on the concessions agreements.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

President Ceja led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Invitation for the public to introduce themselves (not mandatory)

IV. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments.

V. Presentations - None

VI. Meeting Minutes (discussion and/or approval)

A. June 23rd, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the June 23rd, 2026 Board Meeting minutes.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Chess (Motion)	X		
Director Lacayo (Second)	X		
Director Long	X		
Director Mack	X		
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Martinez	X		
President Ceja	X		

VII. Financial Reports (discussion and/or approval)

A. Financials ending May 31st, 2026.

CEO Ortiz noted that the deferred revenue will be \$1.9M despite there being a NET decrease in the May financials.

MOTION: To approve Financials ending May 31st, 2026.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Chess	X		
Director Lacayo (Motion)	X		
Director Long (Second)	X		
Director Mack	X		
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Martinez	X		
President Ceja	X		

VIII. Old Business

A. Surfer's Point Update

CEO Ortiz received a response from the City of Ventura's Public Works Department regarding the outstanding items on the Surfers Point Phase II Project. City staff will be reaching out soon to schedule a meeting to work collaboratively toward closing out the project and updating the MOU. Fair staff has filed the amended application to the Coastal Commission for the beach lot parking increase, which will go through a hearing for review. CEO Ortiz is hopeful for an update by the end of September.

B. 2026 Fair Update

CEO Ortiz shared that the staff is continuing fair execution and set up and is excited to see all the hard work come to fruition next week.

Megan Hook – Marketing and Sponsorships

Ms. Hook stated that pre-sale ticketing surpassed sales of last year. Advertising for radio, TV, and streaming have begun for the fair, in English and in Spanish. She shared that there is also an ad on a billboard on Highway 101. Production for programs and signage continue as well.

Emilee Inez - Exhibits Supervisor

Ms. Inez reported that Entry Weekend was a success, with nearly 8,400 entries, which is 1,000 more entries than what was entered last year. She anticipates the numbers to climb with the addition of accepting day-of entries. She shared that the superintendents did a great job advocating this year, by attending camera clubs and quilting guilds, as well as helping exhibitors submit their entries online.

Jason Amelio – Arena and VIP Manager

Mr. Amelio reported that the arena continues preparations for the VIP area. He is excited to see what changes will be made from last year. The maintenance team continues their hard work with set-up. The sales team is working hard in the credentials department and in camping.

IX. Board Correspondence

- A. Memo from Mike Francesconi at California Dept. of Food & Agriculture, Fairs & Expositions: Department of Housing and Community Development RV and Mobile Home Park Requirements.

CEO Ortiz summarized that the memo determined the RV and Mobile Home Park requirements does not apply to DAA's.

X. Consent Agenda: Items hereunder on the Consent Agenda are considered routine, not requiring separate discussion and will be enacted in one motion. Individual items A, 1-4, are approved by the vote that approves the Consent Agenda, unless an item is pulled for separate consideration.

- A. Agreements
1. Standard Agreements
 2. Rental Agreements – Interim
 3. Concession Agreements
 4. Judges Agreements

CEO Ortiz noted that the concessions agreements was amended with last-minute changes and updated copies have been provided to the Board as well as the public.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda with items A, 1-4.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Chess (Second)	X		
Director Lacayo (Motion)	X		
Director Long	X		
Director Mack			X
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Martinez	X		
President Ceja	X		

Director Mack abstained from the vote due to her involvement with an organization on the concession agreements list.

XI. CEO Report

- The Player's Casino is working to obtain their construction permits from the City of Ventura. They are still planning to move out by January 1st, 2027. CEO Ortiz has notified the CDFA legal team in case new terms are needed.
- CEO Ortiz mentioned that the Fairgrounds Foundation had made improvements to the equestrian center, and donated money to buy a new sound system for the auction barn. They have also donated money to improve the wash rack for livestock.
- CEO Ortiz reported that a mural will be painted on the back of the Oak View Group office trailer, across the Morgan Arena bleachers, and should be completed in time for the fair.

XII. President's Report

- President Ceja shared that he attended 3 City Council meetings with members of the Junior Fair Board and he looks forward to attending more in the future.
- He expressed his excitement for the fair.

XIII. Director's Comments

Director Chess

- Director Chess gave a shout out to Emilee for her great work with the Junior Fair Board.
- She also thanked Ms. Pineda for her help.

Director Mack

- Director Mack commented on how great the new sign at Gate 1 looks.
- She said she looks forward to the art installation at Surfer's Point.

Vice President Martinez

- Vice President Martinez expressed how wonderful it is to see the fairgrounds activated for its intended use.
- She gave kudos to the entire staff.

Director Morgan-Carter

- Director Morgan-Carter echoed the excitement for the fair.
- She enjoyed attending the Moorpark and Simi Valley City Council meetings to present the fair poster.
- She thanked everyone for their hard work.

Director Lacayo

- Director Lacayo thanked the entire staff and the board for their hard work and looks forward to a successful fair.

Director Long

- Director Long expressed his excitement for the fair and is proud of the staff's hard work.
- He commented on the great job the Junior Fair Board did at the City Council meetings.

XIV. Future Agenda Items – None

XV. Closed Session

There was no closed session that took place.

XVI. Report Out of Closed Session – None

XVII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

Submitted by: Karen Pineda
Karen Pineda, Executive Assistant

Approved by: Heidi Ortiz
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by: Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja Jr.
Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja Jr., Board President