



OHIO FAIR MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

Spring Newsletter June 2023

“Its Fair Season”



Ohio's Agricultural Fairs Season set to open and More News

Paulding County Fair opens the Fair season June 12 and then we will have 94 additional County, Independent and the Ohio State Fair run thru the Summer and fall. Exciting times for our youth, exhibitors, vendors and the customers who enjoy Great Fair Foods, Harness Racing, Amusement rides and Grandstand Shows that only a county fair can provide. GOOD LUCK

Spring meetings were well attended by over 740 Fair Officials and Guests. The informational session on updates from the Ohio Department of Agriculture, OSU Extension, GOSA, OHHA Government Advantage Group and OFMA President Paul Harris, 1st VP Stanley Strode, 2nd VP Thomas Stockdale, Treasurer Robert Dawson and Executive Director Howard Call CFE were communicated out. 2023 Ohio Fairs Queen Rebekah Hardacre participated in the meetings and introduced herself to attendee's. OFMA Passes were handed out to those attending Fairs, all fairs attended. Greater Ohio Showman honored the following Fair Officials and staff Cindy Woodman, Lake County Fair Special Appreciation for service to the Lake County Fair, Best Fair Mercer County Fair, Cara Muhlenkamp, Fair Manager of the Year, Mercer County, Special Appreciation Maintenance Director Steve Shaffer Allen County Fair, Dale Spencer Grounds Manager Special Appreciation Award, Montgomery County Fair, Wade Flory, OFMA Director of the Year, and Fair Director of the Year Lori Page Montgomery County Fair.

The Entertainment industry lost an Ohio leader this May with the passing of George Moffett May 14. Howard Call relates a story from Phyllis Greiner that when she worked at Ohio Bell back in the 1960's George worked out of the Masonic Lodge and when making long distance calls he would drop the coins to fast and Phyllis would say "Mr Moffett DO NOT DROP THOSE COINS SO FAST.. I HAVE TO COUNT THEM" . Phyllis Greiner went on to work for George for over 40 years until her passing August 2019 representing fairs on site for concerts and shows. George was a big supporter of the OFMA sponsoring, donating and bringing the Variety staff to Spring Meetings and providing acts for those meeting to entertain. *We will miss you George.*

Fair Safety planning, OFMA suggests that you ensure that your provider can staff your dates and activities and you have a clear understanding of the various rates and fee's. Please ensure that your staffs have done their own grounds inspections for electrical, trip points and ensure that your handicap access points are open and travelable.

Rebekah Hardacre 2023 Ohio Fairs Queen is planning her travel schedule please e-mail her at ohiofairsqueen2023@gmail.com your requests.

Paul Oechsle passed June 2, Obituary page 5

Good Luck and contact your District Director for assistance.

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2023 OFMA Convention Program Report

Paul Harris, President

As I write this newsletter the 2023 fair season is just days away from starting. Ready or not, here we go! Thank you to all that took time to attend the Spring Meetings. I hope you found them informational and inspiring. As we zigzag the state those couple of weekends, it is very uplifting to visit and share your fair and industry ideas. It is your tenacity, graciousness and generosity of time that leads to the success of your fairs and our industry. A thank you as well to our District Directors for setting up these meetings, with a shout out to Kendra Von Lehmden-Wentz and Alan Aichholz for the change up to District 1 and 2. Fresh eyes give way to new ideas, and it was a great evening.

Your OFMA Board continues to lobby on your behalf anywhere and everywhere we can. The positive relationship we currently share with ODA Director Baldrige and David Miran, Division of Fair Chief continues to expand. Our June Board meeting will actually be held at the Department of Agriculture in Reynoldsburg. Director Baldrige extended the invitation, and we look forward to the continued open relationship.

In addition, the OFMA Committees have been busy behind the scenes reviewing the positives and negatives this past year and making plans and adjustments for the 2024 convention. Look forward to the upcoming 100th anniversary in 2025, as well, District 5 Director Kim Myers heads the centennial committee and a spectacular celebration it will be.

As we start the 2023 fair season, let us all hope and pray for dry weather (maybe not this dry), but be prepared for whatever comes your way. Reach out to your District Directors if you need to, don't be afraid to call on a neighbor fair for support. Reach out to a neighbor fair and offer aid if you are needed. We are all in the same business. It is not a competition, every fairs success leads to all of our success.

Also, a huge thank you to Holmes County Fair for organizing and hosting the IAFE Zone 3 meeting. What a fantastic event for all who attended! This event provides beyond a doubt no matter how big or small your fair is, as long as we stand together, we can accomplish anything.

It is with heavy hearts that we bid farewell to Paul Oechsle, OFMA Past President this week. A true leader and icon in the industry. When I came on the Board many years ago, Paul and his wife Joyce went above and beyond to make Pam and I feel welcome. Rest in peace dear friend, your accomplishments and leadership to our industry will not be forgotten.

So, as we kick the doors open on the 2023 season, use the communication skills we have worked on, be prepared to adapt, overcome, and change. Share your successes with us and lets put some smiles on some faces!

**Best Regards,
Paul Harris, OFMA President**





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Past OFMA President Paul Oechsle Passes

Paul G. Oechsle, 80, of Convoy, passed away on Saturday, June 3, 2023, at home surrounded by his family. "God made a farmer" on February 5, 1943. He was the son of Lloyd and Marjorie (Kampf) Oechsle, also of Convoy, who preceded him in death. On November 10, 2007, Paul married Joyce Shuman, who survives in Convoy.

Also surviving are their children: Troy (Jen) Oechsle, Heidi (Duane) Emans, Ann Shuman (Craig Leslie), Andrew Shuman, Edward Shuman, and Thomas (Kristin) Shuman. He is also survived by 6 grandchildren, Austin, Cheyenne, Brady, Shania, William, and Elizabeth, 2 great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

Paul was also preceded in death by his only sister, Sue Ann Gallaway.

Paul was a life-long farmer in Harrison Township, where he also raised pigs. While residing in the township, he served as a township trustee and officer for the Van Wert Township Association.

A great joy in his life was the Van Wert County Fair. Paul served on the fair board for 42 years, heading up many departments and holding many offices, including Fair Manager/Secretary for 22 years. Paul also served as a 4-H advisor for 17 years, helping county youth get excited for the fair as much as he was.

Paul's commitment to the fair industry came to a head by serving on the board of the Ohio Fair Manager's Association (OFMA) and became President, serving one two year term in 2006 and 2007. In 2015, he was inducted into the OFMA Hall of Fame. Paul was a member of St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Van Wert and had joined the Knights of Columbus Council #6034. All his many affiliations brought him great joy. Paul didn't know a stranger and always had a story to tell. He always enjoyed seeing and catching up with all the people he met over the years.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held Saturday, June 10, 2023, beginning at 10:30 a.m. at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Van Wert, Ohio with Fr. Chris Bohnsack officiating. Burial will follow in Woodlawn Cemetery in Ohio City, Ohio.

Family and friends will be received from 2-8 p.m. on Friday, June 9, with a Knights of Columbus service starting at 2pm, and 9-10 am Saturday, June 10 2023 at Alspach-Gearhart Funeral Home in Van Wert.

Online condolences may be expressed at www.alspachgearhart.com.

Editors Note: Paul handled the F&B for years and Carrot Cake was his favorite Dessert as we all know, the Hyatt presented Paul with his own carrot cake at his Induction into the OFHF. God Bless Paul and please look over Joyce.



Entertainment Industry loses a Leader, George Moffett

<https://www.snoufferfuneralhome.com/obituary/George-Moffett>

George Moffett, one of the entertainment industries most respected and beloved talent buyers passed away on Sunday May 14 at Genesis Hospital in Zanesville.

George was a unique individual and in the country music community and county fair industry thousands of people considered him a friend. It would be hard to access the number of lives he touched in his 55-year career.

Toby Keith once said, “George you put a lot of meals on the tables of the boys in the band and crew and diapers on their babies over the years.”

Trace Adkins stated, “George you fed my kids with all the dates you booked.”

Randy Owen of Alabama said, “George was a great friend.”

George attended The Ohio State University his freshman year majoring in business, while there he played trumpet with a dance band and got the idea to secure dates for other dance bands.

His sophomore year he transferred to Muskingum College where he started to book local bands on the side at fraternity parties and social clubs. George founded Variety Attractions in 1961.

Little did he know at the time that Variety Attractions would eventually become a brand that is one of the most respected, trusted, and honored companies in the entertainment world.

Booking artist like **Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, George Jones, Alabama, Garth Brooks, Toby Keith, Trace Adkins** and more from the beginning of their careers and throughout them. To date Variety Attractions has booked over \$1.2 Billion in contracts since its inception and now operates in 24 states.

Not only a fan of music, but George also had a love for the circus world. The animals, the high wire performers, the daredevils, and the excitement the circuses brought to small towns. He recognized this and started booking the animal acts, the high wire acts at local and county fairs across the country.

Over the years as Variety Attractions grew, George was honored on numerous occasions from the **Country Music Association naming him the SRO promoter/talent buyer of the year 4 times**. He was the **Academy of Country Music Awards Talent Buyer of the year 3 times** as well as receiving honors from many state fair associations, including being inducted into the **Ohio Fair Managers Hall of Fame**. He served 3 terms as a director on the **Country Music Association Board of Directors and visited the White House under President Jimmy Carter**. George was one of the founding members of the **International Country Music Buyers Association in Nashville**, along with his colleagues Don Romeo and Hap Peebles. Today the organization is known as the International Entertainment Buyers Association and is recognized as the premier organization for talent buyers of all genres. He served on the board of directors for 30 years received the **Founders Award in 2010 and inducted into their Hall of Fame in 2018**.

George was a man who found his passion and lived it daily as he dedicated his entire life to the entertainment business. He had a natural sense of caring for his clients and colleagues. Those who knew him can attest to that.

Surviving is his wife Shirley (Williams) Moffett; daughter Amy (Rob) Gray; 2 granddaughters Megan (Gray) Van-Dyke; and Elaine Gray.

His legacy will live forever with the George Moffett Scholarship that is endowed at Belmont University in Nashville and awarded annually to a deserving student majoring in an accredited music business class.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to the George Moffett Scholarship Fund by going to <https://www.ieba.org/educational-outreach> or contacting Pam Matthews at 615-670-9601.



THANK YOU... Members, Associates and Sponsors

Bob Dawson, OFMA Treasurer

As shared with many of you at the Spring Meetings, this year's annual convention was an amazing event. I have been blessed to attend more than forty OFMA conventions and in my opinion, the 2023 convention under the leadership of Paul Harris, "takes the cake" as the saying goes. Top notch speakers and presenters, coupled with new twists to many of our favorite events, resulted in record participation and fun!

The financial impact from this event was amazing as well. As your treasurer, it is my responsibility to manage and report the OFMA's finances. Here are a few financial highlights for the record book. Convention Registrations topped \$86,000, a new record, our Gala Auction took in just short of \$22,000 nearly doubling the previous record and Sponsorship revenues hit \$48,000 another record. Other revenues derived from Associate Memberships, the Trade Show and the Gala were extremely strong and near records. All these numbers were derived from strong participation and your generosity and without any increase in fees.

This year's record event will contribute to our continuing record of keeping the OFMA's financial position strong and will keep the OFMA/GOSA PAC where we need it to be, so that we can continue to effectively advocate for our fairs and the fair industry. Your generous support has also allowed us to initiate our 100th Anniversary fund at \$6,000 and over the next two year's our activities and finances will place a major focus on our 100th Anniversary celebration at the 2025 convention.

As your financial watch dog for the past 20 years, every time I feel a need to maybe be concerned with our finances, you have never failed to amaze me with your commitment to the OFMA and our industry. THANK YOU.

Bob-



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Purchasing Web Link established for OFMA Purchases

In response to those of you who wanted a better means of paying for things as a fair, associate or individual for activities the OFMA office has created an on line purchasing program for the following items. The system being developed will be able to limit the total quantity, set a time slot for an activity and allow instant payment via a credit card. Go live date will be Early September

- ⇒ **Queen Application Payments**
- ⇒ **Queen Meals**
- ⇒ **Reverse Raffle Tickets**
- ⇒ **Spouse and Guest Activities**
- ⇒ **Table Reservations for Friday and Saturday Evening Events**
- ⇒ **Special Gift Purchases**

Not available on this site will be **Tradeshow, Registration, Meals or Memberships** The Registration Portal remains for 2024 with your embedded information to update and process.

Future Dates

99th Annual Convention January 4-7, 2024

100th Annual Anniversary January 2-5, 2025

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2023 Document & More Deadlines **Ohio Fair Managers Association**

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All OFMA forms are at ohiofairs.org and Registration Link

- September 1 Hyatt, Sonesta, Hilton Hotel Lodging links
- September 7 Morning Drury Hotel Block Opens Limit 6 per fair
- Due October 22 Ohio Fairs Hall of Fame & Ohio Fairs Communication Entries
- November 30 Ohio Fair's Queen Entries Deadline
- December 10 Annual Meeting Delegate & Alternat forms
- Email all OFMA forms to ofmaform@att.net
- Early Registration Deadline December 10 \$50 per registration
- Late registration after December 11 \$80 per registration
- Hotels Rooming adjustments after December 10 a 1 day hotel charge will apply with each room cancelled
- Columbus Bed Tax avoidance form; ohiofairs.org

Questions e-mail: ohiofairs@att.net website ohiofairs.org

100th Anniversary Convention January 2-5, 2025

101th Convention January 14-18, 2026



Ohio Department of Agriculture Need Dates

Sent to Ohio Department of Agriculture

10 days post election – poll books due to ODA

Wednesday, November 1, 2023: "Outstanding Fair Supporter Form", "Fair Funds Form" and "Fair Dates Form"

Friday, January 5, 2024 Annual Financial Report

Email to: fairs@agri.ohio.gov

Guest Activities Report

Tom Stocksdale, 2nd VP
Chairman Guest Activities

What a grand time we had this year at the special spouses' events with sell outs at each. The enthusiasm was unmatched from prior years and the anticipation for next years, events are even greater.

Our Bourbon Tasting event was a total sell out and we added a second event and it too was totally sold out. Dan Bullen, OFMA Past President was the instructor of the bourbon tasting & education on the distilling of this wonderful beverage. All guests received 5 tastings and were educated on each of them as they tried them. During the sessions the OFMA team discussed some options for next year's events and we anticipate doing a New Riff Single Barrow Select for next year and the purpose is to not only start our own special production

but we will be producing approximately 200-220 specially marked bottles with the special OFMA 99th Anniversary marked on them to be sold at next year's convention. But even more special is the preparation and anticipation of the OFMA 100th anniversary where plans are in effect now for the production of a Newford Reserve Single Barrow Select to also be distributed in special OFMA 100th anniversary bottles....so watch when the event gets fully put together so you can make your rsvp and be one of 80 people to get a spot.

Our Wine & Paint party was just as exciting with another sellout. Our special guest instructor, _Laura, was from Dayton and each of the participants were given from 3-4 canvas options to paint. All took their time and had a great time and we were treated with a special interview from our OFMA Executive Director Howard Call and Lincolnway Vineyard winery owner Jim Borton who shared some comments on wine production as the participants painted. Wine was donated by the OFMA and Troutman Vineyards.

Next year we are possibly looking at a tour of our Ohio Department of Agriculture located at Reynoldsburg and some other options like BINGO. We do appreciate your ideas and suggestions... so please forward them to me at stocks1977@hotmail.com or call the OFMA office. A special thanks goes out to our Spouses' Activities Committee for all the extended time and dedication to these projects.

Tom



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Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Baldrige

We are entering into my favorite time of year, as we kick off Ohio's fair season this month! I am looking forward to seeing many of you as I make my way across the state to visit as many fairs as I can this year.

Fair season brings back so many personal memories for me and I am especially excited to work with my grandkids in the coming years on showing livestock at our fair.

At the Ohio Department of Agriculture, we value our fairs and those who run them. We are always available to assist you with any questions, concerns, or issues you may have at any time during the year. Please reach out to me, Dave Miran, or Erin Dillon.



Thank you for all that you do - and I look forward to seeing you at the fair!

Brian Baldrige, Director
Ohio Department of Agriculture

News from Gallia County Fair

The Gallia County Junior Fair continues their efforts in moving the fairgrounds out of the flood plain. So far, a new horse barn was constructed by our local Thomas Do It Center and donated to the fair.

A 100' x 210' pavilion was constructed in three phases utilizing insurance money from the total loss of our commercial building in a February 2015 fire, and grants from ODA and the Southern Ohio Agr. Community Development Fund. Last fall, we moved approximately 20,000 cubic yards of dirt for future building sites.

Currently, we are installing sanitary sewer lines, storm water drainage, water lines, and roads made possible through a Appalachian Development Program Grant. Due to generous contributions from the Gallia County Commissioners and the Ohio Valley Bank, and a Capital Budget Bill Grant, we have partial funding for a 160' x 450' (approximately) livestock building. We are continuing our efforts to pursue additional funding to make this building a reality.

On the horizon is an approximately 100' x 200' year round facility which would serve as the commercial building and house the non-livestock projects during the fair, and would be rented out for functions throughout the remainder of the year.

Reported by Tim Massie Gallia County Fair

LET'S GET THE PARTY STARTED! OFMA PLANNING FOR THE 100th ANNIVERSARY UNDERWAY!

Founded in 1925, the OFMA will be celebrating its 100th year anniversary at the Annual Convention in January of 2025. The OFMA is excited about celebrating this special occasion with directors, fair managers, organizers, businesses, government officials, and vendors from all over the state. Fairs, festivals, and carnivals are a vital part of Ohio's entertainment and agricultural industry.

Planning is in the works for special events and activities. A sampling of the special events includes entertainment, musical acts, special foods, commemorative memorabilia, amusement rides, and historical exhibits. Many collectible items are currently being designed for this event. A sample of several of the items include an engraved 100-year anniversary bottle of bourbon, commemorative wines, anniversary clocks, clothing, glasses, plaques, and ornaments. Many items will be available for purchase, and many complimentary items will be given away.

The celebration will take place Thursday, January 2nd through Sunday, January 5th 2025 at the Columbus Convention Center. Please save the date and plan on bringing your spouses, families, and friends. Should you have any special suggestions or ideas, please contact me directly at (440) 309-8729 or kim.meyers@protonmail.com. Wishing everyone a prosperous, successful, and safe 2023 fair season!

Kim



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OFMA Supports HB 135, Excused Absence for 4-H and FFA Students

Chairman Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to express the Ohio Fair Managers Association's (OFMA) support of House Bill 135. The OFMA is the statewide association representing Ohio's 95, county fairs, independent fairs and the Ohio State Fair.

HB 135 would require schools to allow students to take excused absences from class for 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) activities. These programs are encouraging the future generation to continue the farming and agriculture traditions of this state. It is important that these students are empowered to participate in these activities without fear of any repercussions for their traditional education and studies.

The Junior Fair activities are the premier events at our fairs for the Ohio youth to shine a spotlight on the work they did on the projects. Whether that be livestock, crafting, cooking or STEM activities, all youth participating gain important experience. They learn useful tools they can carry with them for a lifetime, for example: the importance of animal health, commitment to deadlines and completing projects, good sportsmanship, etc. We need to promote and encourage these traits in Ohioans! Not all learning happens in the classroom and students who are committing their time to participate in these projects and programs, need to feel supported by their schools as well.

This bill is particularly important because more schools are returning to class earlier in the summer. We have included the 2023 county fair schedule as an addendum to this testimony. Please note the high number of fairs that are held in August, September and even into October. These 4-H and FFA participants should never be made to feel like attending the fair to showcase their work is a sacrifice to their K-12 education. These activities should be complementary to their education and development as young citizens. We know many school districts are supportive of these students during the week of the fair, but creating a statewide standard that these absences will be excused is important.

Chairman, members of the committee, the OFMA appreciates your consideration and hope the legislation is favorably passed.

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Nostalgia

- “its delicate, but potent. In Greek nostalgia literally means ‘the pain from an old wound.’ It’s a twinge in your heart far more powerful than memory alone. This device isn’t a spaceship, it’s a time machine. It goes backwards, and forwards... it takes us to a place where we ache to go again. It’s not called the wheel, It’s called the carousel. It let’s us travel the way a child travels – around and around, and back home again, to a place where we know are loved.”

“Mad Men Don Draper”



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The advertisement for Kissel Amusement Co. features a vibrant image of a roller coaster and a Ferris wheel against a blue sky with clouds. The text 'KISSEL Amusement Co.' is at the top left. A large, colorful banner across the middle reads 'FUNNEL CAKES'. At the bottom, a blue banner contains the text 'Going the extra mile to see you smile', 'Call us today 330-353-6189', 'Thrilling Rides - Fair Food - Family Games', and 'www.kisselamusement.com'. A bright green diagonal line cuts across the bottom right corner.



Bill Would Create Agriculture Designations

Legislation from Representatives Roy Klopfenstein and Darrell Kick is moving quickly. [House Bill 162](#) would create several designations that are agriculture related. They are as follows:

March 21st – Agriculture Day

An end week of February – FFA Week

October 12th – Farmers Day

The week ending with the second Saturday of March – 4-H Week

The OFMA was able to submit comments in support of the bill before the House Agriculture Committee on May 16, 2023. Kirk Bloir from OSU Extension presented proponent testimony. The bill has already been favorably reported by the committee and awaits a vote by the full House of Representatives.

Fraud Reporting Legislation

Senator Tim Schaffer has introduced [Senate Bill 91](#) regarding fraud reporting and education. This bill is supported by Auditor Faber and several local government groups, including the County Commissioners Association. The intent is to catch fraud and abuse sooner than would normally be uncovered during an entity's financial audits.

- Requires the Dept. of Administrative Services to administer training material (created by the State Auditor) about Ohio's fraud reporting system and how to report fraud, waste and abuse to each new employee or elected official upon taking office or beginning employment with a public office (fair board members are not considered elected officials);
 - Requires officials and employees to confirm receipt of the material within 30 days of taking office via signature;
 - Requires the training to be administered every 4 years;
 - Requires all of the following to report violations of laws, misuse of resources or a cybersecurity event immediately to the AOS via the fraud reporting system:
 - Elected officials.
 - Public appointments
 - Individuals with fiduciary duty to a public office
 - Supervisors in a public office
 - Public employees responsible for processing expenses of their office
 - States individuals who recklessly fail to report fraud may be found as have committed dereliction of duty;
 - Also allows employees to file written reports of violations to their supervisors;
- Bans disciplinary action against individuals who report fraud;

There is an amendment scheduled for next week that would remove the cybersecurity provisions (to be included in a separate bill) and remove language making recklessly failing to report fraud a dereliction of duty.

State Budget Process On-Going

The first half of odd numbered years are dominated by debate on the state's biennial budget bill. The process starts with the Governor's proposal, which has been introduced as [House Bill 33](#). The House passed their version of the proposal on April 26, 2023, by a vote of 77-19. The House made some significant changes to the Governor's proposal. The bill is now being considered by the Ohio Senate, who is expected to make significant additional changes. The process will culminate with a conference committee in June to craft a final bill for enactment.

Among the notable changes in the House were regarding tax policy. The House version reduces, beginning in tax year 2023, the number of income tax brackets, by consolidating the lowest bracket (2.765% for income between \$26,050 and \$46,100) with the second lowest bracket (3.226% for income between \$46,100 and \$92,150). Reduces the rate of that new lowest bracket to 2.75%. The Senate will also be looking at tax policy and could propose even great reductions.

The Ohio Fair Managers Association has been advocating for a substantial increase in the Ohio Department of Agriculture budget line Item GRF 700501 that is used to reimburse county and independent agricultural societies for their Junior Fair activities.

Rod Arter, OFMA Past President, testified before the House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources on March 21, 2023, regarding this request. The House version of the budget did increase the junior fair line item to \$760,000 per year. (this represents double the investment from the as-introduced version). The House version also appropriates \$4.7 million in the second fiscal year to be used to support county and independent agricultural societies.

Roger Smith testified before the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee in favor of the House version of the bill on May 3, 2023. OFMA members are encouraged to contact their Ohio Senators requesting they support the appropriations for fairs. In addition to the traditional appropriations for the Ohio Exposition Commission, the bill includes \$95 million per fiscal year for EXPO 2050. This will be used for the renovations to the State Fairgrounds, a priority project for the Governor.

Virgil Strickler testified on behalf of the Expo Commission before the House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources regarding the budget requests and plans for grounds renovations. OFMA is also supporting the appropriations for the State Fairgrounds.

4-H Legislation Has Hearings

Legislation was introduced in 2022 to require schools to provide students with excused absences for participating in 4-H activities. Representatives Thomas Hall and Rodney Creech have reintroduced the concept through [House Bill 135](#). This version allows for excused absences for 4-H and FFA activities. The bill does not allow these excused absences to occur during scheduled state testing or during a period of time the student might otherwise be disciplined, suspended or expelled. The OFMA formally weighed in with proponent testimony for the May 23, 2023 hearing before the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee. Other proponents include, OSU Extension, the Ohio Association of Agricultural Educators, The Farm Bureau, several FFA and 40H students and GOSA. The committee seems very much in favor of the legislation.

August Election Teed Up

The Ohio legislature has approved a measure, SJR2, that would do two things:
Provide for an August 8, 2023 special election.

On the August ballot would be a constitutional amendment to raise the threshold to change Ohio's constitution to 60% of the vote, from the current 50% +1.

The issue will appear on the August ballot as Issue 1. This highly publicized proposal will bring about many competing messages. Several large business groups like the Ohio Farm Bureau and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce have come out in support of the initiative. They are not supporting the effort because of social issues (like a possible reproductive rights amendment proposal) but because of efforts to put issues such as increasing the minimum wage on the ballot. Opposing the measure of union groups and reproductive freedom organization, who view Issue 1 as a way to squash their ballot initiative effort. Expect to hear a lot more about this issue over the next couple of months.

Catalytic Converter Legislation

Representatives Bob Young and Bill Roemer have introduced legislation in response to the increase in catalytic converter thefts in Ohio. The bill, [House Bill 110](#), would make catalytic converters a special purchase article, requiring scrap metal dealers who purchase them comply with additional requirements

Minimum Wage Legislation and Ballot Initiative

As is the case every General Assembly, legislation has been introduced to increase Ohio's minimum wage. This year it is [House Bill 96](#). HB 96 is sponsored by Representatives Dontavius Jarrells and Ismail Mohamed. Under the bill the minimum wage would increase \$1 per year until it reaches \$15 in 2028, after that the rate would increase based on inflation.

Separately, a group called Raise the Wage Ohio is pursuing a statewide ballot initiative. They recently had their language certified by the Ohio Attorney General's office and the Ohio Ballot Board. This proposal would take the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in January 2026.

Youth Employment Bill Passes Senate – Making Progress in House

Senator Tim Schaffer (R) has reintroduced [Senate Bill 30](#) regarding youth employment. The bill would allow those under 16 to be employed after 7pm during school year. It would state that with parent or guardian's permission, those under 16 could work until 9pm. The Ohio Senate has already favorably passed SB 30 by a vote of 25-7. The bill was then considered by the House Commerce and Labor Committee which has reported the bill. It now awaits action by the full House of Representatives.

Strickler to Retires from the Expo Commission

The Ohio Exposition Commission has announced that the 2023 State Fair will be Virgil Strickler's last one as General Manager. After nearly 30 years with the Expo Commission, Mr. Strickler is retiring. To commemorate his dedication and service to the fair, the Youth Reserve Program is being renamed in his honor. The state will under go a nationwide search for Strickler's replace. That search committee will be led by ODNR Director Mary Mertz.

How to Contact Your Lobbyist

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2023 Final Calculations for Ohio County Fairs

VLT Purse Pool Support and Ohio Fairs Fund Allocation

	Division	VLT Purse Allocation	Ohio Fairs Fund Allocation	Total Base Purse
1.	2-year-old Colt Pace	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
2.	3-year-old Colt Pace	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
3.	2-year-old Filly Pace	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
4.	3-year-old Filly Pace	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
5.	2-year-old Colt Trot	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
6.	3-year-old Colt Trot	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
7.	2-year-old Filly Trot	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
8.	3-year-old Filly Trot	\$ 8,181.48	\$318.52 + \$500 FB Match = \$818.52	\$ 9,000
\$65,451.84 per Fair, For 65 Racing Fairs = \$4,254,369.60 [2017 = \$6,200 or \$7,198 per division base] [2018 = \$6,400 or \$7,364 per division base + 2.3%] [2019 = \$6,600 or \$7,571 per division base + 2.8%] [2020 = \$6,600 or \$7,586.75 per division base + 2.1 %] [2021 = \$6,999.57 or \$7,795 per division base + 2.6 %] [2022 = \$7,497.85 or \$8,400 per division base + 6.6%]			\$2,548.15 Per Fair for Stakes Purses (For 65 Racing Fairs = \$165,629.75)	
VLT Discretionary Support Total Distributed			Ohio Fairs Fund Total Distributed	
9.	Capital Improvements Matching Grant Program '19 - \$115,100 '20 - \$68,706.35 '21 - \$83,288.05 '22 - \$98,616.39	\$107,150	\$2,548.15 - Up to \$3,000.00 (\$500 each for 6 of the 8 divisions) can be used as its portion of the match That leaves \$0 for overnight race purses and the fair must add \$1,451.85 to the stakes race allocation per the law to add \$500 per division. Total for 65 Racing Fairs = \$165,629.75	
10.	Per Fair Expenses Support	\$12,000	\$637.04 (Track Maintenance and Racing Expenses) + \$395.47 (General Operation) [Total each Fair for ancillary expenses: \$1,257.83] Total Expenses to each of the 65 Fairs = \$67,113.15	
	Fair Support for 65 Fairs	\$780,000		
	Total OHHA Fair Support Per Racing Fair x 65 Racing Fairs	\$77,451.84	\$395.47 to 29 Non-Racing Fairs Total to 29 = \$11,468.63	
11.	Total OHHA Fair Support Per 29 Non-Racing Fairs	\$2,000	Coding of the Ohio Fairs Fund ² <u>General Operating</u> 2-1-2110 \$ 395.47 <u>Track Maintenance and Expenses</u> 2-1-2130, \$ 637.04 <u>Non-Stakes Purses</u> 2-1-2130 \$ 2,548.15 <u>Stakes Purses</u> 2-1-2140 \$ 2,548.15 Check Per Racing Fair: \$ 6,128.81	
	Fair Support for 29 Fairs	\$58,000		
12.	On-Track Insurance Support, Up-to 2 days per Racing Fair [\$260 per day total 128 days]	\$33,280		
13.	Signature Fair Race Support Grants from \$1,000 to \$200,000	\$376,600	Add \$ 76,444.60 for OH State Fair, the 66th Racing Fair	
14.	Ohio Breeder's Championships	\$700,000		
15.	Ohio State Fair	\$700,000		
Total OHHA VLT Monies Fair Support x 65 Racing Fairs and 29 Non-Racing Fairs. 2022 Total = \$6,874,204 2021 Total = \$5,925,964 2020 Total = \$5,700,512 2019 Total = \$5,642,898 2018 Total = \$5,594,614 2017 Total = \$5,279,164		\$ 7,009,399.60	Total OH Fairs Fund Distribution	\$486,285.88
\$ 7,495,685.48 = Total Fair Support for 2023 (95 Fairs Racing and Non-Racing)				

— OSHA's National Emphasis Program Fall Protection

On May 1, 2023, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced it began a National Emphasis Program (NEP) designed to prevent falls (<https://www.osha.gov/news/newsreleases/national/05012023>). Falls are among the most common causes of serious work-related injuries and deaths. According to OSHA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), since 2014 there have been a total of 12,049 fatal workplace injuries due to falls. Of those 12,049 fatalities, 5,369 were "Fatal falls to lower levels" and 6,680 were due to "Slips, trips and falls." These injuries and fatalities are preventable, so a National Emphasis Program is necessary to ensure these hazards are being addressed. In fact, year after year, both Fall Protection – General Requirements (29 CFR 1926.501) and Fall Protection – Training Requirements (29 CFR 1926.503) are among OSHA's Top 10 Violations.

This NEP will establish guidelines for OSHA compliance and safety officers to initiate inspections under the scope of the NEP whenever they observe someone working at heights. This may occur during an inspector's normal work-day travel while enroute to, from or during other OSHA inspections. As with all NEP's, OSHA will have a 90-day outreach program for industry to focus on educating employers about effective ways to keep employees safe. Although this NEP is geared towards the construction industry, general industry and agriculture will be targeted as well.

Employers, according to OSHA, are required to keep a safe workplace for their employees by:

- 1) Providing working conditions that are that are free of known hazards,
- 2) Ensuring work areas and floors are clean and dry, as far as possible,
- 3) Selecting and providing required personal protective equipment at no cost to workers, and
- 4) Training workers about hazards in languages they understand.

In addition, employers should follow the guidelines below to prevent falls and help minimize inspections.

- 1) Ensure every floor hole into which a worker can accidentally walk is properly guarded. Using a railing and a toe board or a floor hole cover are acceptable means.
- 2) If there are open sided platforms, floors or runways, provide a guard rail and toe-board around them.
- 3) Regardless of height, if a worker can fall into or onto dangerous machines or equipment (such as a vat of acid or a conveyor belt) employers must provide guardrails and toe-boards to prevent workers from falling and getting injured.
- 4) Evaluate all other jobs that require fall protection that include safety harness and line, safety nets, stair railing and handrails.

As you can see, OSHA is taking injuries and fatalities due to falls, very seriously. They will be increasing inspections and enforcement at any time they see employees working at heights. Employers can minimize the impact of these inspections and enforcement activities and protect employees by following fall protection regulations for construction, general industry, and agriculture.

For more information on the National Emphasis Program on Fall Protection, go to the following link <https://www.osha.gov/fall-protection> or to view other National Emphasis Programs implemented by OSHA, go to <https://www.osha.gov/enforcement/directives/nep>. You may also contact Sedgwick's Andy Sawan at 330.819.4728 or andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com

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