



Wilton Simpson
Commissioner of Agriculture



Cheryl F. Flood
Chief Executive Officer

December 27, 2024

The Honorable Daniel Perez
Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives
420 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

Dear Speaker Perez:

In compliance with Section 616.263, Florida Statutes, I am pleased to submit the attached Oversight Plan which contains the goals, objectives and accomplishments as established by my office for the Florida State Fair Authority for this past Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The Oversight Plan also outlines the newly established goals and objectives for the current fiscal year.

I am also transmitting the 2024 Annual Report of the Florida State Fair Authority, as well as details of some of this year's State Fair attractions!

We are pleased with the accomplishments made this past fiscal year. We look forward to continued improvements.

Sincerely,

Cheryl F. Flood
Chief Executive Officer

CF/ws
Enclosures

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Tampa, FL 33680

FLORIDA STATE FAIR AUTHORITY

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

FLORIDA 
STATE FAIRGROUNDS

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FLORIDA STATE FAIR AUTHORITY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Florida State Fairgrounds is to create positive entertainment experiences through:

- ◆ The annual Florida State Fair.
- ◆ A variety of year-round events.
- ◆ Quality competitive programs.
- ◆ A commitment to agriculture, education, and community service.
- ◆ A focus on new opportunities.



HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

Today the Florida State Fair is one of the largest fairs and festivals in the United States and Canada. However, the history of the Fair is a microcosm of the History of Florida, with its fortunes rising and falling with the “booms and busts” of Florida’s often stormy development. Early records reflect that on May 15, 1868, merchants in and around Jacksonville hosted the Grand Consolidation Festival, a bold gesture for Reconstruction Florida just after the conclusion of the Civil War.

By 1873, tourism was a big business in Jacksonville, and the Jacksonville Board of Trade came up with the idea of a state fair to increase tourism and combat the effects of the financial panic of 1873. The popularity of these fairs led to the establishment of a permanent fair building on a 20-acre site, known as the Fairfield. The Florida Fruit Growers Association joined with the Duval County Agricultural and Horticultural Society as sponsors of the Florida State Fair, which opened February 22, 1876. Opening day dignitaries at the 1887 Florida State Fair included President Grover Cleveland, who proclaimed, “Floridians are a people who represent not only a new South, but a new era of American life.”

The success of the Florida State Fair waxed and waned, and the Jacksonville event was replaced by the Sub-Tropical Exposition from 1888 until 1892. These extravaganzas were open during tourist season (January-April) and attracted thousands of visitors. However, amid Yellow Fever epidemic and other issues, the gates closed the fourth season just 30 days after opening. Fairs in Jacksonville continued irregularly. In 1901, the Board of Lady Managers formed to create a “first genuine state agricultural fair.” On May 3, 1901, Jacksonville was ravaged by a catastrophic fire, but six months later, the Florida State Fair opened as a symbol of the indomitable spirit of the people of Jacksonville.

Today’s Florida State Fair is part of the legacy railroad tycoon H.B. Plant bequeathed Florida. While similar activities were occurring in Jacksonville, in 1898, Plant inaugurated the Tampa Agricultural Racing and Fair Association as an event to promote his lavish Tampa Bay Hotel. In 1904, the event became formalized as the South Florida Fair Association, from which the modern Florida State Fair reportedly evolved. The Fair has occurred every year except during the World Wars, when the Fairs were cancelled in 1918, and 1942 through 1945. The Tampa Fair eventually became the Florida State Fair when the Jacksonville Association sold the rights of the name to the Tampa organization in 1937. By 1961, the fair was listed as the Florida State Fair and Gasparilla Association, Inc.



HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION (continued)

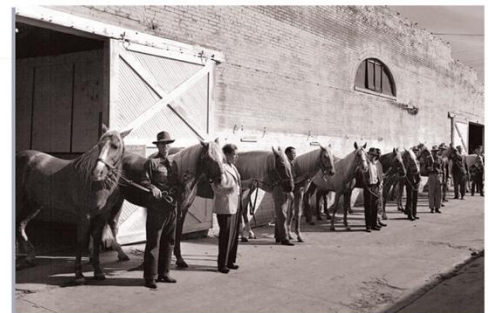
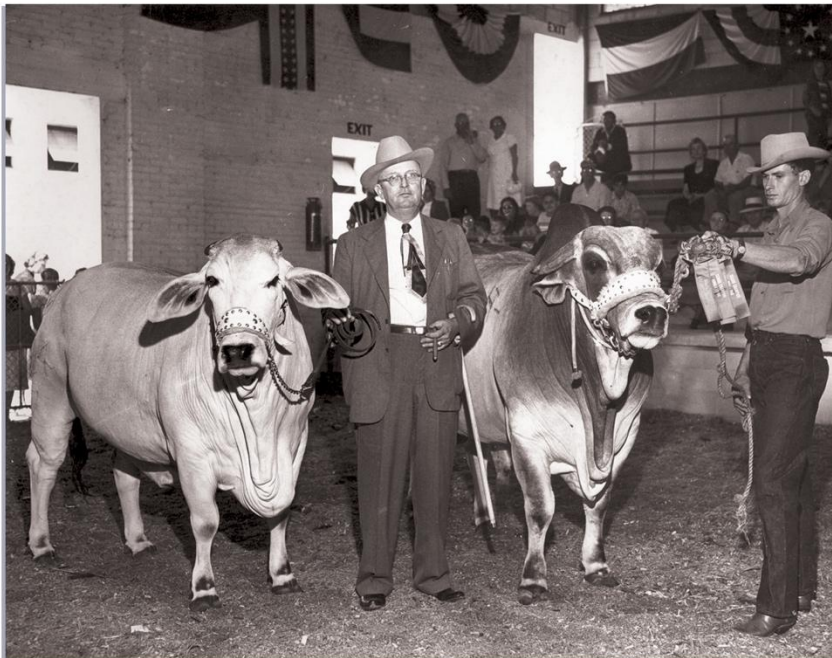
In 1974, by Florida Statutes 616, the Florida Legislature created the Florida State Fair Authority and reaffirmed the annual Tampa event as the official Florida State Fair. After being held for more than 70 years on a 27-acre plot adjoining the University of Tampa, which was the former Tampa Bay Hotel, the Florida State Fair moved to its current 330-acre site, the Florida State Fairgrounds, seven miles east of Downtown Tampa on Interstate 4 and U.S. Hwy 301. The first Florida State Fair was held at the new fairgrounds in February 1977. While the grounds were being developed, the 1976 Fair was held at the former Tampa Stadium.

Funding for the purchase and development of the Florida State Fairgrounds came from the State Legislature and revenue bonds issued by the Florida State Fair Authority. Initial operating monies were from funds accumulated by the former Florida State Fair, Gasparilla Association, Inc., and other private sources. The Florida State Fair Authority holds title to the property.

Effective July 1, 1995, Senate Bill 932 (Chapter 95-220) gave the Commissioner of Agriculture sole responsibility to appoint a 21-member Florida State Fair Authority. The members serve a term of four years and may be appointed for more than one term.

With the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, the Florida State Fair Authority's financial position has improved so that the Authority now has the resources to conduct a continuing capital maintenance program. The Florida State Fair Authority provides a wholesome, family-oriented annual program for the citizens of Florida and its many visitors. Florida State Fair programs have undergone a continuing review process in an effort to control costs and improve revenues. All Authority activities are conducted in compliance with the Florida Sunshine Law.

An August 2006 study conducted by the University of South Florida Center for Economic Development determined the activities of the Florida State Fair Authority supported a total of 1,267 jobs in the State of Florida, \$171.4 million in sales and \$43.4 million in wages.



LONG RANGE PLANNING

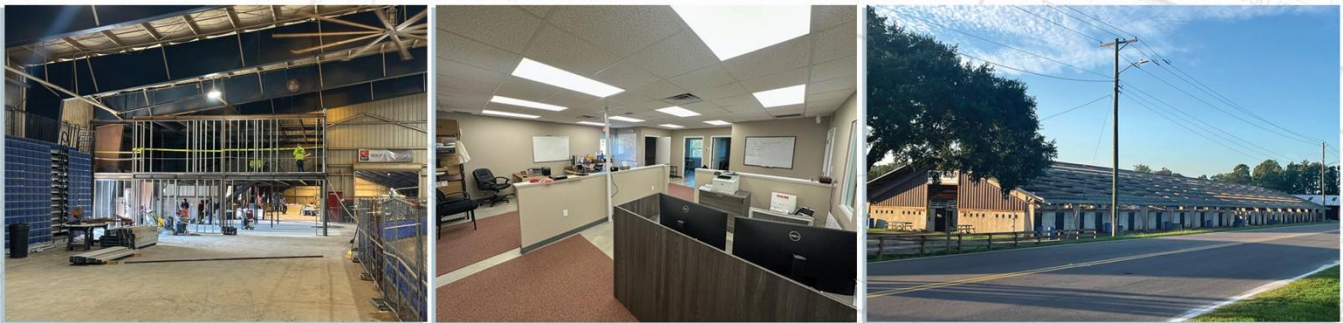
In September 2006, the Florida State Fair Authority Board adopted a new Long-Range Plan recommended by Bullock, Smith and Partners. Bullock, Smith and Partners is an architectural and planning firm that has completed more than 100 fairgrounds projects in 38 states and worldwide.

In December 2012, the Long-Range Planning committee attempted to prioritize the major components of the Plan and narrowed the priorities to the following three areas along with their estimated cost:

1. Expansion/Renovation of Expo Hall - \$35.7 mil
2. Other Building Renovations/Relocations/Additions - \$3.7 mil
3. Roads/Infrastructure/Other - \$3.5 mil

The Long-Range Plan also included an RV Park concept with an estimated cost of \$4.0 mil. The conceptual recommendations of an RV park feasibility study were accepted by the Board at a meeting on April 21, 2009. However, this plan was put on hold as the Authority searched for a more comprehensive plan in developing the Fairgrounds. The Board recognized that any development plan for the Fairgrounds must be in compliance with the Live Nation Amphitheatre Agreement, the Centerplate food services agreement, and applicable State Statutes.

In November of 2013 the Authority, after receiving approval by the Board, released an Invitation to Participate (ITP) for the purpose of having development firms present their ideas on potential opportunities for the Fairground. After months of evaluation and then negotiations with Republic Land Development, the Board voted unanimously to reject a proposal from Republic at the December 15, 2015, Board meeting. At this time no additional proposals have been either received or solicited by the Fair Authority and all major development is currently on hold.



Effective July 1, 1995, Senate Bill 932 (Chapter 95-220) gave the Commissioner of Agriculture sole responsibility to appoint a 21-member Florida State Fair Authority. The members serve a term of four years and may be appointed for more than one term.

Membership June 30, 2024

Honorable Wilton Simpson Tallahassee, FL	Richard Bowman Delray Beach, FL New Term: Sept. 29, 2022 – June 28, 2025
Reggie Holt Lakeland, FL Term: March 20, 2023 – March 19, 2027	Charles “Chuck” Bruno Riverview, FL New Term: June 30, 2022 – June 29, 2026
Jake Raburn Lithia, FL New Term: March 20, 2023 – March 19, 2027	Doyle E. Carlton, III Wauchula, FL New Term: June 30, 2021 - June 30, 2025
Susanne Clemons Okeechobee, FL New Term: May 30, 2023 – May 29, 2027	Cynthia B. Sanders, Phd Tampa, FL New Term: June 29, 2022 – June 28, 2026
Robert Thomas Thonotosassa, FL New Term: March 20, 2023 – March 19, 2027	John “Jack” T. Vogel San Antonio, FL Term: July 1, 2022 – June 29, 2026
Eve Council Gloede Tampa, FL New Term: March 31, 2021 - March 31, 2025	Marcia Lightsey Lake Wales, FL New Term: June 30, 2021 – June 30, 2025
Chad Lyons Mayo, FL New Term: March 20, 2023 – March 19, 2027	A.D. “Sandy” MacKinnon Tampa, FL New Term: June 30, 2022 – June 29, 2026
Charlie Lykes Lake Placid, FL New Term: March 20, 2023 – March 19, 2027	Honorable Gwen Myers, District 3 Tampa, FL Term: December 2, 2020 – June 6, 2024
Ted Schrader Tampa, FL Term: March 20, 2023 – March 19, 2027	Amanda Taylor St. Pete, FL New Term: June 6, 2022 – June 5, 2026
Linda Syfrett Okeechobee, FL New Term: June 30, 2022 – June 29, 2026	Thaddeus Bullard Lutz, FL Term: January 6, 2021 – May 29, 2025
Archie Collins Tampa, FL Term: March 20, 2023 – March 19, 2027	

June 30, 2024 Officers

Chairman – Susanne Clemons
 Vice Chairman – Jake Raburn
 Treasurer – Linda Syfrett
 Secretary – Eve Council Gloede



Management Staff as of June 30, 2024

Executive Director.....	Cheryl Flood
Chief Operating Officer.....	Michael Rogalsky
Chief Financial Officer.....	John Prestianni
Director of Museum Operations.....	Cindy Horton
Director of Agribusiness.....	Lynann Hudson
Director of Equestrian.....	Jerel Clay Crosby
Director of Human Resources.....	Laura Clark
Director of Information Technology.....	Scott Baker
Director of Marketing & Partnerships.....	Patty Chandler
Event Services Manager.....	Zack Kunkel
Sales Manager for Events	Cynthia Burgos



2024 FLORIDA STATE FAIR – February 8th through 19th, 2024

SUMMARY OF DAILY ATTENDANCE AND REVENUE WITH COMPARISON TO 2023 and 2022

		ATTENDANCE			REVENUE		
		2024	2023	2022	2024	2023	2022
DAY 1	Thursday	17,140	15,233	15,146	\$103,213	\$84,191	\$68,658
DAY 2	Friday	17,557	17,148	16,061	179,615	149,662	147,062
DAY 3	Saturday	51,032	34,283	49,631	590,253	342,240	556,431
DAY 4	Sunday	32,364	29,288	23,440	335,335	300,095	243,873
DAY 5	Monday	16,233	18,489	19,643	131,406	150,591	116,772
DAY 6	Tuesday	17,947	23,804	26,854	145,322	161,453	88,383
DAY 7	Wednesday	23,611	19,931	19,771	213,344	164,755	157,019
DAY 8	Thursday	33,256	29,784	22,168	173,834	143,235	175,995
DAY 9	Friday	58,246	47,126	64,394	526,610	385,699	464,069
DAY 10	Saturday	20,139	72,297	67,949	203,169	832,779	798,465
DAY 11	Sunday	5,381	66,462	68,900	15,428	764,235	772,300
DAY 12	Monday	45,593	32,043	34,243	338,486	303,120	303,120
TOTALS		338,499	405,888	428,200	\$2,956,015	\$3,757,275	\$3,892,147

** Revenue excludes unredeemed advance sales and payments for credential permits and photo IDs.



**FLORIDA STATE FAIR AUTHORITY
FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET + PRIOR 2 YEARS ACTUALS**

	<u>2025 BUDGET</u>	<u>2024 ACTUAL</u>	<u>2023 ACTUAL</u>
REVENUE:			
FAIR INCOME	\$ 15,066,500	\$11,629,200	\$13,383,200
NON-FAIR INCOME	6,943,200	7,407,900	6,593,300
EQUESTRIAN	910,900	1,356,100	1,572,400
AMPHITHEATRE REVENUE	1,456,300	2,065,400	1,193,200
CRACKER COUNTRY	500,400	493,100	480,400
OTHER INCOME	638,300	666,800	697,600
INTEREST INCOME	104,500	195,100	77,400
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>25,620,100</u>	<u>23,813,600</u>	<u>23,997,500</u>
OPERATING EXPENSES:			
SALARIES & WAGES	6,474,100	6,168,200	5,685,500
PAYROLL & FRINGE BENEFITS	1,515,200	1,420,000	1,282,900
TELEPHONE & UTILITIES	1,876,600	1,764,300	1,756,200
COMMISSIONS	2,846,500	1,976,300	2,510,800
COST OF GOODS SOLD	302,500	276,200	339,200
SHOWS & TALENT	880,900	885,000	788,200
PROPERTY & LIABILITY INSURANCE	1,342,300	1,175,700	1,003,000
SUPPLIES, DECORATIONS & FUEL	941,000	1,064,100	1,027,600
CONTRACTED SERVICES	3,416,700	3,508,500	3,156,800
ADVERTISING & SIGNS	734,700	705,500	762,100
PREMIUMS & AWARDS	516,400	466,800	430,400
EQUIPMENT RENTALS	1,050,500	1,038,600	1,129,900
PROFESSIONAL & LEGAL FEES	276,900	318,600	349,200
TRAVEL AND LODGING	80,300	66,000	116,500
AUTO, TRUCK & EQUIPMENT REPAIR	102,500	118,900	100,200
SPECIAL EVENTS	292,000	308,300	294,000
POSTAGE & PRINTING	121,900	122,200	143,200
INTEREST EXPENSE	43,000	46,100	48,800
CREDIT CARD / BANK FEES	388,200	302,900	309,500
LUNCHEONS & MEETINGS	102,300	123,700	93,100
OTHER EXPENSES	127,700	120,000	141,100
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>23,432,200</u>	<u>21,975,900</u>	<u>21,468,200</u>
INCOME PRIOR TO DEPRECIATION	2,411,700	1,837,600	2,529,300
DEPRECIATION	(3,761,400)	(3,247,500)	(2,891,200)
OTHER GAIN/(LOSS)	-	(41,500)	49,000
GASB 87 ADJUSTMENT	-	248,300	258,000
NET INCOME BEFORE GRANTS	<u>\$ (1,573,500)</u>	<u>\$ (1,203,100)</u>	<u>\$ (54,900)</u>
GOVERNMENTAL GRANTS	1,941,400	2,160,600	1,841,500
NET INCOME	<u>\$ 367,900</u>	<u>\$ 957,500</u>	<u>\$ 1,786,600</u>



COMPARISON OF STATE FAIR REVENUE SOURCES

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
ADMISSIONS	\$3,226,700	\$4,055,500	\$4,126,500	\$2,640,300	\$3,743,200	\$3,604,800
MIDWAY	4,144,600	5,205,800	5,723,500	4,095,000	5,414,700	5,752,800
CONCESSIONS	1,747,600	1,788,500	1,819,100	1,650,400	1,737,100	1,717,900
SPONSORSHIPS	1,058,000	991,200	975,800	1,019,100	1,151,500	1,043,900
EXHIBITS	583,000	562,600	543,400	399,200	653,500	636,000
AGRICULTURE	630,500	503,300	418,100	341,000	411,300	431,700
OTHER	238,700	276,300	248,600	162,800	319,200	343,400
TOTALS	\$11,629,100	\$13,383,200	\$13,855,000	\$10,307,800	\$13,430,500	\$13,530,500



OVERVIEW OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

On June 26, 2023, the Authority Board approved an operational budget with net loss of \$767,900 for fiscal year 2025. Due to heavy rains on the second weekend at the 2024 Fair, the Authority fell \$2.9 million dollars short of the Fair Revenue budget. However, significantly higher revenue from the Non-Fair and Amphitheater events offset over 60% of the Fair revenue deficit. Rising prices continued to be a serious challenge for Authority costs in FY2024. The Fair Authority savings in midway ride operator commissions were more than offset by large cost increases for wages, contracted services, insurance, and entertainment costs. Excluding the commission savings, our operational expenditures increased 5.1% over FY 2023, but less than 1% over the FY2024 budgeted costs.

The Authority also approved a capital budget in the amount of \$8,070,600 for fiscal year 2024 that included \$1,675,600 in carryover budget amounts from fiscal year 2023. The Authority spent \$6,198,00 in fiscal year 2024, with our exterior restroom project under construction as of June 30, 2024. Phase I of this project (three restrooms) is scheduled for completion in August of 2024 with Phase II scheduled to start in September of 2024.

We utilized the remaining state grant funds of \$1,436,300, carried over from fiscal year 2023, for the carryover projects completed in fiscal year 2024. The Fair Authority was awarded \$3,000,000 in government grants of which \$733,700 was funded in FY2024. The remainder is expected to be utilized in the first six months of FY2025 to fund the exterior restrooms and major building renovations.

The Fair Authority was experiencing a very successful fair in 2024 until heavy rains occurred on the second weekend. Excluding our pandemic impacted Fair in 2021, our final attendance of 338,499 was our lowest attendance in the last 30 years. This attendance was over 90,000 lower than our budgeted attendance goal of 430,000. Our revenue was \$2.9M lower than budgeted with expense savings only offsetting \$900,00 of that deficit.

As of June 30, 2023, our unrestricted cash and cash equivalents fell from historically high levels to a balance of \$3,589,500 that is still “above average” for the end of our fiscal year. Our cash decreased by \$2,128,600 or 37% from our balance on June 30, 2023. Short-term investments were at \$2,772,000 as of June 30, 2024, with a slight increase of \$76,300 over fiscal year 2023. The Authority starts fiscal year 2025 with lower, but healthy, cash reserves and a positive event outlook. Spending on capital expenditures in the coming fiscal year will be limited until after the 2025 Fair, so as not to further deplete our reserves.



STATEMENTS OF NET POSITION

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>BALANCES</u>		<u>Notes on Category Changes</u>
	<u>6/30/24</u>	<u>6/30/23</u>	
Unrestricted Cash	\$3,589,500	\$5,718,100	Reduction due to lower operating income from the rain during the 2024 Fair.
Accounts Receivable (net)	1,272,300	876,700	Increase is primarily from High School graduations payment not received until July for FY2024, higher concert revenue in May and June and higher Government grants accrued.
Gross Fixed Assets	90,667,900	87,128,700	Large capital projects in FY2024 included a new Security Gate and Overhang (\$1,237,600), new Agriculture office (\$619,000), Equestrian footing restoration (\$455,500), and IT Upgrades (\$359,600) and Equestrian roofs (\$326,600) comprise additions over \$300,000.
Accounts Payables/ Accrued Expenses	1,297,300	1,335,500	No material change in this area.
Deferred Service Concession Arrangements	66,700	173,800	Normal amortization of concession agreement.
LT Capital Leases	989,900	1,061,500	Normal amortization of debt instruments.



MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION

The following management's discussion and analysis (MD&A) of the financial performance and activity of the Florida State Fair Authority (Authority) is to provide management's analysis of the financial statements of the Authority for the years ended June 30, 2024 and 2023 and key operational developments that occurred in the 2024 fiscal year.

STATEMENTS OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION

The 2024 Fair operations generated \$11,629,200 in revenue offset by fair operation expenses of \$9,666,100 for an operating income from fair operations of \$1,963,100. The 2023 Fair operations generated \$13,383,200 in revenue offset by fair operation expenses of \$99,869,100 for an operating income from fair operations of \$3,514,200.

Heavy rains occurred on the second weekend of the 2024 Fair, causing a 16.6% attendance decrease. The attendance drop, resulted in Fair income decreasing by over \$1.7M versus the 2023 Fair. 2024 ride commission expenses, tied directly to midway revenue, were 21.5% lower than 2023 commission costs. All other expenses increased by 4.5% over the 2023 costs. Some savings were realized by cutting staffing on the rain days, but most costs were fixed, resulting in little or no savings.

The 2024 Non-fair revenue was \$9,257,100 with \$3,986,500 in associated expenses for a net Non-fair income of \$5,270,600. For fiscal year 2023, the Non-fair revenue was \$8,646,100 with \$3,879,400 in associated expenses for a net Non-fair income of \$4,766,700. The Fair Authority had twenty-four new events in fiscal year 2024 that were the driving force in our revenue increase.

Other operating revenue (Amphitheatre, Long term leases, Billboard, etc.) was \$2,693,500 in 2024 versus \$21,876,600 in 2023. In fiscal years 2024 and 2023, respectively, \$2,069,500 and \$1,178,500 were attributed to the Amphitheater agreement. In addition, \$288,500 and \$485,100 were attributed to long-term lease agreements and contracts. The decrease is the result of an overpayment by Cingular Wireless on their lease in prior years that was refunded in fiscal year 2024.

General and administrative expenses for fiscal year 2024 were \$8,254,900 compared to \$7,671,000 for fiscal year 2023. This increase was mainly driven from wages, benefits, and insurance cost increases along with additional contracted services. A 4.9% CPI increase in wages, a 21.2% increase in property & liability insurance and various unanticipated maintenance projects were the major causes of this increase.

Operating income before depreciation was \$1,667,700 for fiscal year 2024 as compared to \$2,491,100 for fiscal year 2023, a decrease of \$823,400.

Income from operations after depreciation for fiscal year 2024 was a loss of 1,579,800 compared to a loss of \$400,100 for fiscal year 2023. This was a decrease of \$1,179,800.



Special Accounting Presentations and Extra Ordinary Items

In fiscal years 2024 and 2023 other revenue/expense) included \$2,160,602 and \$1,841,481 respectively in grants from the State of Florida and \$293,200 and \$267,600 respectively of interest income from the implementation of GASB 87 for long term leases. Other items related to interest, investment gain or losses and sale of assets totaled a net gain of \$107,500 in 2024 as compared to a net gain of 77,600 in 2023, an increase of \$29,800 to the net position. The loss on sale of assets reflects the sale of the Giant Slide to Wade shows. The activity on the investments in both years was due to fluctuations in the Fair Value on investments in the state fund.

Operational Developments

The Fair Authority experienced a record year in FY2024 for our Non-fair and Cracker Country events with more than a 12% increase in revenue over FY2023. This was accomplished by adding 15 major non-fair events along with healthy growth in attendance for most of our returning events and school tours. However, lower attendance at Annual State Fair due to rain on the second weekend, more than offset the non-fair gains. The Equestrian center also lost one major event and had another impacted by a hurricane in late September 2023 that decreased their revenue by 14%.

The Amphitheater had a record year with forty-four concerts and 590,000 tickets sold. This is a 73% increase over 2023 when Live Nation hosted twenty-two concerts with 261,000 tickets sold.

Price increases in payroll, insurance and contracted costs continued to pose a challenge that is common throughout the economy. The Fair Authority, through capital investment in 2023 and 2024, has managed to trim down our equipment rental needs and reduce electrical consumption with various lighting upgrades.

The Fair Authority had 6,198,300 and \$5,729,200 in capital additions in the fiscal years 2024 and 2023, respectively. The Fair Authority had no significant long term debt activity in either fiscal year 2024 or 2023, other than normal debt payment and amortization.

The Authority executed a contract in May 2024 for \$686,397 with Bayco Contracting FL, LLC. for the renovation of six (6) free-standing restroom facilities. The work was divided into two phases with the first phase commencing in May of 2024 and the second phase scheduled to commence in September 2024. In fiscal year \$228,152 was paid to the contractor. Outstanding commitments on the contract at 6/30/24 is \$456,245 with completion expected by November 1, 2024.

The Authority had no significant changes in credit rating.

The Fair Authority is prohibited from borrowing funds except for issuance of bonds. However, due to the Authority having no tax revenue, the Authority has little or no ability to issue a bond.



The following long-term agreements were executed in Fiscal Year 2024:

A 3-year extension with Roadmaster was approved by the Fair Authority Board on October 23, 2023, and executed on January 2, 2024.

A new 2-year sponsorship agreement with Daikin Applied Americas was approved by the Fair Authority Board on October 23, 2023, and executed on March 4, 2024

A 4-year agreement with Canon USA Inc. for three Canon copiers was approved by the Fair Authority Board on January 10, 2024, and executed on the same day.

A 20-year agreement with Tampa Electric was approved by the Fair Authority Board on October 23, 2023, and executed on March 5, 2024. Tampa Electric will install eight new poles and 144 lights in our parking and other exterior areas. The agreement includes maintenance (or replacement) for all fixtures with monthly payments over the term of the lease to pay for the improvements.

A 3-year agreement with the University of Tampa (effective December of 2024) was approved by the Fair Authority Board on June 10, 2024 and executed on July 10, 2024.

A 3-year agreement with St. Petersburg Dog Fanciers for the June Dog Show was approved by the Fair Authority Board on June 26, 2023, and executed on April 24, 2024. The August Dog show has been discontinued at this time.

A 3-year sponsorship agreement with Tampa Electric for naming rights to our arena was approved by the Fair Authority Board on December 13, 2022, and effective on January 1, 2023. Payments on the contract were completed by Tampa Electric in a timely manner, but the executed was not received by the Fair Authority until July 24, 2023.



FAIR ACTIVITIES

The 119th Florida State Fair in 2024 saw Fair attendance decrease from 405,888 to 338,499 due to heavy rains on the last Saturday and Sunday of the Fair. Our second weekend is normally where the highest Fair attendance occurs. Our overall revenue for the 2024 Fair was our third lowest in the last 15 years and our net income was over \$2M under budget.

Despite the weather, our guests enjoyed their Fair visit as they checked out thrilling entertainment, delicious foods and exciting rides and exhibits. The Florida State Fair entertainment experience for 2024 included new performances from the Sea Lion Splash, Paul Bunyon Lumberjack show, Texas Trick Riders, and Rainforest Experience. The fair also added many local music acts, a Foam Zone for kids and “3D Chalk” art displays. In the Equestrian center, we brought back the fan favorite “Lawn Mower” races for two days of action-packed fun.

There were plenty of new and exciting foods available throughout the fairgrounds for guests to indulge on in their Florida State Fair experience. Our new “\$3 Thursday” allowed vendors to serve up sample sized fair foods for a great price. This allowed fairgoers to have an opportunity to taste so much more compared to having to pay full price for fair food.

Our Livestock events featured more than 5,000 animals to both entertain and educate our patrons. Many of these patrons participated in the hands-on activities offered at the Ag-Venture Exhibit and the opportunity to see baby Holstein calves being born at the “Mooternity Ward” The Florida Cattlemen’s Museum and Forestry Discovery Center continue to draw large crowds.

Cracker Country Living History Museum (included with Fair Admission) offered fairgoers a chance to step into rural Florida history before the turn of the 20th century. Our permanent collection of historic 19th century buildings was enhanced by over twenty-five period craft, cooking and life skills demonstrators and vendors. Musical entertainment featured bluegrass bands Southern Express and Bits of Grass.

The Florida Center was home to the Florida State Fair Competitive Exhibits, School Exhibits, Arts & Crafts Contests, Hillsborough County Public Schools displays with a tribute to Black History Month showcase and multiple special performances each year. Our Creative Living competitions included horticulture, baking, food preservation, photography, fine art, sewing, needlework, quilting, crafts, woodwork, and technology. The Florida Center also hosted STEAM related activities and Combat Robotic Competitions, and numerous art activities.

Other unique offerings at the Florida State Fair included the “Florida’s Learning Garden” teaching guests how to care for a mature/established landscape and create a small-scale organic vegetable garden and much more. In the Agriculture Hall of Fame building, Ag-Venture became the center exhibit focusing on the Importance of Florida Agriculture with many hands-on activities. The “Little Farm Hands” kids, (ages 3-8) become farm hands at this free, hands-on exhibit. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services presented the “Insect Encounter” that once again entertained patrons with bugs and other crawling creatures.

Attached please find the Audit Report for the Florida State Fair Authority for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024.

