



OCF Database Project Summary

From: The Database Workgroup, January, 2020

The staff, volunteers, booth people and entertainers, as well as the friends and families who provide support to these folks, are the greatest asset of the Oregon Country Fair and are considered Fair Family. To ensure all Fair Family have an easy experience getting their wristbands and other credentials it is essential that the Fair have an accurate record; this is done with a database. The same database also records Fair Membership and subscription to the Fair Family News.

A group of volunteers and employees has been meeting with stakeholders from various parts of the Fair for going on two years and have been compiling the needs of crews, committees, and other groups who currently use Fair data. We have a very good sense of why we need a new database. These include:

Access

Currently, information about the Fair Family is held in various places with varying degrees of accuracy and we do not have a way to contact or interact with the entire group. The Fair can ensure the security of Fair Family information more effectively when stored in a Fair owned database. Some of the information that is not centralized is booth participation, crafter records, some security crew participation, and teen crew participation.

Membership

The Fair lacks an effective way to keep an accurate, complete record of who is eligible for membership and hence to vote for the Board of Directors according to the OCF bylaws. Due to numerous systems that track participation that are not integrated with the membership database, it is challenging to assess membership eligibility.

Ease of Use

While the fair event can continue with this disjointed information environment, dissatisfaction with managing the existing process increases. As the number of people obtaining wristbands increases, it will become more and more onerous to continue with the current method of distributing passes and collecting money for them.

Accuracy

In the course of a year people move, change emails, or even decide they no longer want to receive a ballot or the Fair Family News. Many crews use only email, so they don't update physical addresses in the current database. Annually, the Fair spends a good deal of money on return postage for ballots and FFN.

Evolution

To move the Fair in the direction of electronic voting, a comprehensive membership database is essential. We would also like to relieve coordinators and booth reps from the burden of handling so much cash, as well as making the whole money flow more accountable and auditable.

We are seeking solutions to the issues listed above, as well as other unique challenges specific groups have identified. There are several parts to what the team has identified as solutions to our current challenges. Here are some of the conclusions/solutions:

- Everyone's data should be in one place. It should be well secured and access to it should be only on a need to know basis.
- To have the most up-to-date information, people should be allowed to update their

own profile.

- The database should allow Crew Leaders and Booth Reps to assign wristbands and passes to people.
- Individuals should then be able to log into the database and pay for their passes with a credit/debit card.
- The database should record a person's involvement in Fair year after year.
- Elections committee should be able to evaluate membership eligibility based on one's Fair participation and voting history, as specified in our bylaws.
- The database should be flexible enough to allow crews to do scheduling, email correspondence, generate labels, and other activities they have expressed interest in.

There has been much thought about next steps and we are working with volunteers with relevant expertise to help us look at the possible solutions and their pluses and minuses. Factors that will be weighed include: Does the solution deliver the functions we need? What is the cost? How well can we manage risk with the solution? Can we build/have built the additional capabilities we need?

If you would like more information about this topic, the Database work group encourages you to come to a town hall meeting Wednesday, February 5, from 6-8 pm, at North West Youth Corps (same room as Board meetings). We will describe our process to date and next steps in further detail. There will also be some time for Q & A. If you would like to submit a question to be answered by the Database work group, please email database@oregoncountryfair.org.