

UPDATE TO OUR FAIR FAMILY

Hello Everyone,

I hope this finds you well and that you are all staying safe and healthy. We know that the Fair is still a long way off, but for many preparations have long been underway. We know how much our essential event means to everyone in our Fair Family and that any changes to it will have real impacts on our lives. For many of us, the Fair is the most important event of our year and fills our soul until the following July. This annual chance to come together on the land we cherish is what spiritually rejuvenates us. It is with this awareness in mind that we seek to stay connected by keeping you informed about what is happening with the Fair during this challenging time.

There is much for us to consider in what would ordinarily be a busy spring season of getting ready for the 2020 Oregon Country Fair. We will start by saying that at this time no decisions have been confirmed on changing the schedule of our main event. As you might expect, with the rapid changes that each new day is bringing, many of the typical event preparations have been put on hold. Ticket sales for the public have not yet been launched. Work parties and other Fair tasks that require in-person gatherings are being postponed. Most Fair committees, groups, and even some crews are continuing to meet and work remotely, although some are also being postponed when appropriate. We are adapting each day as new information and restrictions come in.

As you are likely aware by now, the OCF town office, along with the site itself, are closed. The employees and BOD are continuing to do as much of the regular work of the Fair as possible, but the reality of the situation is that much of the work focus has shifted to responding to and addressing the impacts of COVID-19. All are working entirely through remote online systems. We are also working to expand those remote systems so that they can accommodate our sudden increasing needs. The BOD is working with staff to prepare for any necessary actions that must be addressed at the next BOD meeting on Monday, April 6th. Meanwhile, there are a few specific things to touch on as we move forward.

In order to keep our family safe, the decision has been made to formally cancel the Spring Fling. It is looking less and less likely that a group gathering of that size will be either appropriate or allowed by May. This will also allow the staff to redirect the staff time required for that event toward managing the influx of new work that responding to COVID-19 has created. We do hope that when it is safe to do so, we can come together to put on a similar type event – so please stay tuned, and let us know if this is something you would be interested in volunteering to help with.

It was an abundance of caution that led to the decision to temporarily close the Fair site a couple weeks ago. We know that it is a large and open outdoor space and people love to spend time there, but the first concern is the health and safety of the employees and of our Fair Family. We are looking into when and how we might safely reopen the site to visitors, but our first priority at the moment is working on the decisions around the 2020 event. Of course the Governor's announcement this week also has an impact on that decision. Until we get enough clear information and guidance from health professionals and officials regarding what is appropriate, and have the protocols we would need to have in place to keep each other safe, we ask for your understanding and that you honor the temporary site closure.

For now, we want you to know that as we gain a better understanding of the impacts this crisis is having on the OCF and how we can best respond to them, we will be actively looking at how to come together in meaningful ways to support each other, including our crafters, food booths, entertainers, our Fair Family with higher risks, and others who are the most greatly impacted by this. We are a tremendously powerful and resilient community, and while we may be temporarily

unable to gather together in the ways in which we are most accustomed, we can still stay connected and work together to face these challenges.

Please take care of yourselves and your fellow Fair Families. Check in on those you know who are at higher risk whenever you can. It will be through our spirit of generosity, and our years of experience creating our community, that we can all get through this together.

Thank you for being Family.

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