



Kootenai County Fairgrounds  
North Idaho State Fair  
4056 N Government Way  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Release after 6/30/20

For more information, contact:  
Alexcia Jordan, General Manager  
email: [alexcia@nisfair.fun](mailto:alexcia@nisfair.fun)  
Office: 208-765-4969  
Cell: 208-301-0183

Coeur d'Alene, ID - The North Idaho State Fair, one of the region's largest summer events, has been cancelled. After months of optimistic planning to cautiously move forward with this year's fair and rodeo, the Fair Board received a strong recommendation from local health officials on June 26<sup>th</sup> to cancel the 2020 North Idaho State Fair and Gem State Stampede. That evening the Fair Board voted via email to cancel the 2020 Fair after evaluating all options and noting recent uptick in cases within Kootenai County. The Fair Board is committed to creating a plan to provide the 4-H youth of our area the opportunity to complete the projects they have worked so hard on in preparation of the traditional fair this year.

"Safety of our fair family and community as well as the financial future of the fair were our top priorities in coming to this incredibly heartbreaking decision", said Alexcia Jordan, General Manager of the North Idaho State Fair & Gem State Stampede.

Last year the fair saw over 97,000 visitors in just five days. This event attracts guests from all over the region to participate, compete, and perform at the fair, rodeo, demo derby, concert stages and livestock shows.

The staff and Fair Board have been working closely with local health officials and authorities over the last three months to create a plan to move forward responsibly with the fair. Although a fluid plan was created, Governor Little's recommendation to remain in Stage 4, rendered any current plans unusable.

"We can only plan for the moment we are in, not for what we hope it will be 60 days from now", said Alexcia. "We held on as long as we could. It takes a complex network of businesses, organizations, and people to coordinate a fair of this magnitude. We needed to make decisions to move forward today knowing those decisions would find success in August. We are grateful to our amazingly generous community for their continued support and their understanding of this incredibly hard situations we are all in."

Lora Whalen, Director from Panhandle Health said, "I support and commend the Fair Board for making this difficult decision. The data clearly demonstrates the exponential growth in positive cases in Kootenai County. Thank you for your willingness to make this decision to protect public health."



Less than 4% of the Fairgrounds annual budget comes from county tax dollars. The Fair Board relies on revenues generated from the fair each year and other event rentals to survive. From mid-March until mid-June, no events were held on the grounds due to COVID-19. The North Idaho State Fair is not county-funded and the Fair Board, not the county, employs the staff. The amount of preparation and investment required to execute any modified fair would have imposed a huge financial risk, jeopardizing the future of the fair, especially if the event would have been cancelled at a date closer to the event. The Fair Board will move forward conservatively from here to ensure next year's Fair is the best Kootenai County has ever seen.

"Our primary considerations must be protecting both the heritage and the financial health of the Fairgrounds", said County Commissioner Chris Fillios. "It would not be fiscally or ethically responsible to continue committing resources for the Fair, knowing that a last-minute cancellation could irreparably damage their long-term financial stability. The Board of Commissioners has every confidence in our Fair Board and Staff. We know this has been a difficult decision for them and look forward to seeing them come back bigger and better than ever next year."

Plans to move forward with 4-H programming will be sent to 4-H families in the coming days. Tickets purchased for the 2020 North Idaho State Fair, carnival and grandstand events will be refunded within the next two weeks. Should you have questions about your ticket refunds please contact the office after July 15 at 208-765-4969.

The 2021 North Idaho State Fair and Gem State Stampede will be scheduled for August 25 – 29, 2021.