

Washington County Fair Complex  
**BOOSTERS**

*Protecting the Public Trust*

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Date: January 19, 2010

To: Washington County Commission  
155 N. First Avenue - Suite #300, MS-21  
Hillsboro, OR 97124-3072

Ref: Fair Boosters response and comments on the Draft "Washington County And Washington County Fair Board Memorandum of Understanding" (aka "MOU")

Dear Commissioners; Tom Brian, Andy Duyck, Roy Rogers, Dick Schouten and Desari Strader,

Please allow us this opportunity on behalf of the Washington County Fair Boosters to respond to the proposed 'draft' Fair and Fairgrounds Agreement Memo of Understanding (MOU). As you know our organization has long believed that the current management structure for the Fairgrounds and County fair has been seriously flawed. We fully believe that in light of performance and results especially over the past decade, there must be a better way to manage these public Fairgrounds and carry out the Fair Complex mission.

We certainly applaud that a new agreement between the Fair Board and Board of Commissioners (BOC) that will clearly define and separate the functions regarding management of the property and the staging of the Annual County Fair. We believe this is another major defining moment in the history of the 156 year-old Washington County Fair and Fairgrounds institution. This is a great opportunity to set the future stage that will allow for success in finally building to the Fairgrounds Master Plan, while preserving the basic connection of this public asset to all of the citizens of Washington County. As you know our primary focus as an organization has been, and will continue to be, assuring the residents an opportunity to fully participate in the greatest County fair possible. We also will continue to advocate for the use of year round facilities that are available, affordable and accessible for use by all residents of Washington County.

Since we believe this is a defining moment for our County's history, please allow us to address specific clarifications and definitions which we believe need to be addressed and included in the current "Draft MOU":

**Fair Board Composition:** We have long believed that the cross-agendas of fair board members have contributed to lack of progress towards better facilities and maintaining the public trust of user groups. There is ample evidence to support the separation of management of the property from the operations of the County fair and concur that the County should take a direct role in managing the Fairgrounds and building to its Master Plan. We further believe that there should be a greater separation from the County regarding staging the Annual County Fair.

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To accomplish this, our first choice would be the creation of a fair association as allowed by Oregon Revised Statute. If this option is not feasible, then we believe that the composition of the Fair Board must reflect the "stakeholders/end users" of the Fair Event. This could easily be accomplished by specific nominations to the BOC, one each nomination from seven (7) separate organizations directly related to the Fair Event. We would love to share our specifics regarding this nomination aspect. Once the nominations have been received, the BOC would review those nominations for compliance with all applicable laws and then make their appointments to the Fair Board based on these nominations. In this manner it should assure that all users have direct and accountable representation on the Fair Board.

**Dedicated Money:** The allocation of the dedicated County lodging tax ("Transient Room Tax") must be defined within this MOU. Since this was a voter approved measure to assure the future of the Annual County Fair, the MOU must reflect that mandate. Due to the new division of responsibility as proposed, we believe that a specific formula dividing the revenue between fair facilities and the fair event must be defined. This will assure the continuing success of the County Fair as mandated by voters.

**Fair Staff:** The success of most fairs directly relates to a clear mission by its Fair Board which is carried out effectively by its staff and volunteers. We therefore believe the MOU must clearly define that a Fair Manager is recruited, hired, compensated and evaluated by the Fair Board. This person must be employed at the pleasure of the Fair Board. Anything less reduces the success and effectiveness of the Fair Board to a meaningless Advisory Board – contrary to Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS 565).

**Access to Fairgrounds:** By definition the MOU should address access to the Fairgrounds. This would include use of the entire Fairgrounds for the county fair, 4-H horse fair and related events. Off season use should define storage areas, meeting areas and facility use for trainings, animal weigh-ins, etc. Related organizations such as the Master Gardeners, Livestock Association, Fair Boosters, Dairy Women, Granges, etc. have traditionally and should maintain a presence at the Fair Grounds.

These specifics outline the Boosters most outstanding clarifications suggested to the "Draft MOU". We hope you accept these as thoughtful, deliberate and worthy of careful consideration to improve and guarantee a bright future for the Annual Fair and Fairgrounds.

We have forwarded these comments herein to your County Administrator for incorporation into the Open Comments which they requested for the "Draft MOU" as issued on 1/4/10 by same.

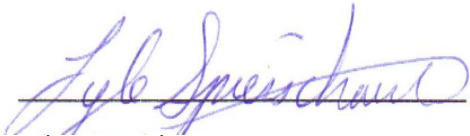
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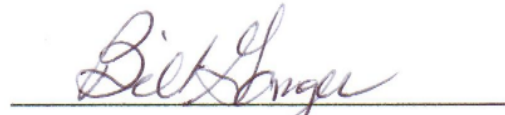
In closing, please know that we respect and appreciate all that you have each done regarding protecting the 'public trust' associated with this County treasure. However, we must note that the road to this point has not been easy and not without great cost. To be candid, there continues to be unnecessary destruction of buildings without a method to replace; an accelerated erosion of critical relationships; an ongoing decline in major community events staged at the Fairgrounds; and underutilization of existing facilities.

On the other hand, an unprecedented Master Plan designed to build to the future has been adopted. That plan has enjoyed broad based community support because the citizens were involved from the beginning of that process and in a meaningful way which garnered the very best results. We believe and hope that this new MOU will in fact reflect that same spirit of **community collaboration** by empowering engaged citizens of the County to create and define their future gathering place at the Fairgrounds. We believe that anything less, would need to be justified as it related to the very purpose for this valued public asset.

Sincerely,



Lyle Spiesschaert  
Fair Boosters President (2008 & 2009)  
Fair Booster Liaison to BOC



Bill Ganger  
Fair Boosters President (2010)

CC: Rod Rice – Deputy County Administrator  
Philip Brandford –County Communications Manager  
Tom Black – Booster Vice President (2010)  
Eileen Marxer – Booster Secretary (2010)  
Jim Clute – Booster Treasurer (2010)