

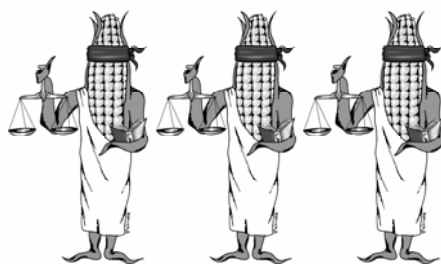
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**IOWA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION  
YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION  
STATE FAIR *TRIAL BY JURY* PROGRAM**

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## **I. Project Description**

The *Trial By Jury* program is a community mock trial presented annually on each of the ten nights of the Iowa State Fair by attorneys, judges and court reporters from across the state. The objective of the *Trial By Jury* project is to illustrate the art of the trial, courtroom procedures and courtroom etiquette in an entertaining forum to educate the public about the judicial and legal system. The members of the public are encouraged to participate as jurors and ask questions of all kinds. The program provides an opportunity to put a human face on the legal system by fostering communication between members of the bar and members of the general public.

## **II. Project Planning/Development**

### **A. Identification of Need**

State Fair *Trial by Jury* was conceived as a way to provide entertaining information about the justice system and to expose the public to legal professionals in a non-legal setting. Many members of the public view the jury system, and the courtroom itself, with apprehension and uncertainty. The general public often lacks accurate information about how the legal system works until they find themselves in a legal dispute. Questions about courtroom procedures are often inappropriate or awkward in an actual courtroom or trial setting, leading to confusion and a lack of confidence in the legal system and the judiciary as a whole.

*Trial by Jury* brings the elements of the courtroom experience to the public in a forum that encourages questions and observations of the different styles used by judges and attorneys. This program is designed to inform and instruct the public about the trial process in a lighthearted forum and provide the public with access to vital information about common legal issues.

State Fair *Trial by Jury* was originally conceived as a public service project that would encourage young lawyers to connect with the public and provide entertainment at the state fair. State fairs are annual events showcasing the resources of a state in a fun atmosphere. Hundreds of thousands of individuals from all walks of life attend state fairs. In addition to the food, entertainment and fun, many people attend state fairs to learn about goods and services available in the state. Representatives from all areas of government and private industry are present.

Fifteen years ago, the Young Lawyers Division of the Iowa State Bar Association (the “YLD”) realized that the legal community could do more with the State Fair venue to communicate with and educate the public.

The YLD identified a lack of representation at the Fair by the legal community; at the time, the law was represented primarily by law enforcement and social services.

The State Fair *Trial by Jury* program is flexible and can be adapted by both large and small YLD affiliates. The program may be presented at a state fair, or used at a county fair. The program works well as an annual event, but may also be a one time event. Smaller jurisdictions may wish to experiment with the program before adopting it on an annual basis. Larger affiliates can showcase the program at the state fair and offer information on how to bring the program to county fairs.

As an example of the potential impact this public service project can make, a million individuals attended the 2003 Iowa State Fair. This project therefore has the potential to reach a vast number of individuals, from all parts of a state, urban and rural, and people from across the United States who travel each year specifically to attend a state fair.

## **B. Determination of Project Goals and Design**

The primary goal of the project is to provide the public with the opportunity to participate in a mock courtroom trial with some of the most energetic and dynamic members of the bench and bar while increasing awareness and education about the jury system. This informal setting allows the public to participate more directly with the attorneys, judges and court reporters, and to appreciate the various roles that each party plays in conducting a trial.

Another primary objective of the committee is to create a more productive relationship between the bar and the general public. The need for this type of outreach is illustrated by the increasing frustration expressed by the public about the legal system in general. Our committee has identified a public need for clear information about the legal process, basic legal concepts, and the use of the courtroom as a method for resolving disputes. The ability to present a short mock trial with time for questions permits the general public to envision the complex nature of a trial while maintaining enough interest in the proceedings to be entertained.

State Fair *Trial by Jury* uses timely legal issues of interest to the general public to draw in an audience, and re-creates a real courtroom, complete with actual attorneys, witnesses, judges and court reporters to conduct the trial. The project is designed to take issues the public will be familiar with and situate them in the context of a legal dispute. Simple by design, the problem can be changed each year and new attorneys, judges, etc., invited to participate.

### **1. Decisions to be made**

#### **a. Options – Project Goals**

The primary goal is to be able to present the Trial By Jury program during the state fair on an annual basis. A secondary goal is to secure participation from legal professionals in all areas of the state. The first step is to identify the level at which the program will be presented, either at the state fair or at county fair venues, and whether the program will be performed on an annual basis or as a one-time event.

Another primary goal of the program is to secure participation by a wide variety of individuals to illustrate the complex nature and interdependency of the trial system. Securing the participation of court reporters, judges and laypersons is vital to attaining the project goal of making the legal system more tenable to the public.

## **b. Options – Project Design**

To design this project for your affiliate, the first step is to secure an appropriate venue to conduct the trial. Fairs are usually scheduled over a year ahead of time, and space for the upcoming year's event may be reserved well in advance. The affiliate should contact either the state fair administration or the county fair extension service to determine the dates and requirements for selecting a venue. A site visit to observe the place where the trial will take place is highly recommended. On the state level, it is reasonable to expect crowds from 25-150 persons. The choice of an indoor versus an outdoor facility will depend on the weather and time of year for the project. Evening performances are generally more convenient for the participants and will also draw larger crowds.

The next step in the design process is to select mock trial problems suitable for public consumption. Timely, interesting legal issues from national or local news are appropriate and will spark additional interest in the program. Examples of topics selected in the past include: road rage, lemon car sales, splitting proceeds from a winning lottery ticket, a defective amusement park ride, copyright infringement, insider trading, dog bites and sports injuries. The affiliate should draft problems using only two witnesses per side, and create jury instructions that state the law in plain, layperson terms. The mock trial materials should include witness statements that will serve as the basis of the testimony.

Affiliates may discover that certain topic areas will be more popular than others. In states with large rural populations, a case addressing an agricultural or environmental issue may draw larger crowds. If the project is going to be performed in a county fair venue, coordination with local youth groups may also generate topics of interest to that demographic, and the youth groups themselves may serve as a source of volunteers for the program.

Once the mock trial materials have been written, the next step in the design process is to recruit members of the bar, bench and court reporting organizations to participate in the event. Solicitations for volunteers can be made in local legal publications or at monthly meetings of legal groups. The volunteers should receive accurate information about the nature of the event and the time commitment involved.

Next, the affiliate should obtain legal information that can be distributed at the event. Coordination with the state or county bar associations and courthouses is often necessary to obtain a variety of materials. Copies of the materials should be prepared in advance.

Later on in the process, the affiliate will wish to obtain souvenir items for use in promoting the event, such as paper fans, pencils, etc. to be distributed at the venue. Other complimentary items to be distributed to the trial participants should be selected and ordered. One of the final steps is to obtain the items used to set up the courtroom, including counsel tables, a podium and sound system, a flag, gavel, etc. Props relevant to the mock trial problem can be created, purchased or rented, depending on need. A program should be prepared when the schedule is complete and made available for distribution at the event. A comment and evaluation form should also be prepared for use by the moderator of the program to gauge the success of the event.

## **2. Decision-making process**

A State Fair Committee, consisting of Chair, Vice-Chair and approximately 15-20 members, makes the primary decisions. The committee is responsible for securing the funding and cooperation of the community to host the event. The committee may wish to divide the duties associated with the event. It is useful for a group of several people to write and test out the mock trial problems to identify inconsistencies, errors, or a trial that appears unfairly weighted for one side or another.

A fundraising subcommittee can contact potential donor sources to arrange for either monetary contributions or in-kind donations of souvenirs, set rentals, etc., with the offer of recognition in the printed program.

A subcommittee to promote the event is absolutely essential. This includes promotion of the event in both the community, via newspaper, community datebooks, radio, TV, Internet and other media, as well as promoting the event within the legal community to obtain participants. A large committee could be broken down further to recruit judges and then to recruit court reporters and another group to contact attorneys. Attention should be given not to devote all the attorney slots to seasoned young trial lawyers. Government lawyers, corporate attorneys and judicial clerks are also populations within the legal community that may wish to participate.

A purchasing subcommittee may be useful to budget for the group and to obtain admission tickets to the fair, parking passes, T-shirts, fans and other items. This committee may also be responsible for determining whether or not the committee will pay to copy legal materials to distribute or whether those materials can be obtained free of charge from other sources.

### **3. Considerations in project planning**

#### **a. Community Resources**

The success of the program depends on reliable participation by young lawyers, judges and court reporters. Variety in both types of judges and attorneys, as well as geographic diversity is always an important goal.

The program can also utilize the high school and junior high school mock trial resources in the community by scheduling special nights to showcase champion mock trial teams. For small affiliates, this can be a particularly effective source of additional help and might have a secondary benefit of allowing the affiliate to showcase their other good works in the community.

For programs designed to be performed at county fairs, the local 4-H or Future Farmers groups may wish to use the mock trial process as a teaching tool and ask for assistance in learning the nuts and bolts of the mock trial process. An affiliate may wish to coordinate operations with the mock trial committee to maximize the impact of the program.

Your local or state bar association is an enormous resource for this particular program. The large assortment of legal pamphlets and booklets to distribute are most likely already available free of charge. The committee can work in conjunction with other groups, including the ISBA Bench and Bar Committee and other YLD committees to provide up to date, user-friendly materials and to recruit participants. Literature directed at specific populations, such as the elderly or linguistic minorities should not be overlooked. If materials are available in other languages, be sure to provide these as well. An email address for the committee provided in the program itself can often lead to requests for more information later in the year.

#### **b. Personnel**

A committee member may serve as the emcee or moderator on a rotating basis at each night of the fair. For each night of the fair, the committee must recruit two attorneys, four witnesses, a judge and a court reporter to participate. The affiliate may choose to have each committee member secure the participants for their night, or it may wish to have a specific person be responsible for recruiting each type of participant.

It is important to plan for cancellations. Recruit individuals or rely on committee members to serve as substitutes in the event of a cancellation. Scripts and pre-written questions for each trial may be prepared in advance to assist with last minute role changes.

The affiliate may wish to consider asking the administrative staff of the bar association to participate in the program as witnesses or bailiffs. This builds goodwill between the bar staff and the committees, and serves as a way to reward your local bar staff for all the hard work they do for the YLD.

The affiliate may wish to invite a local judge and a local court reporter to serve as liaison members of the committee to communicate with their colleagues. This can be very useful, as it provides direct access to volunteers and also builds camaraderie between the bench, bar and reporters.

**c. Revenue availability/fundraising**

The Iowa YLD State Fair Committee receives a yearly funding appropriation from the YLD Executive Council, and supplements this money with fund raising. The budget for the program remains relatively constant from year to year. A sample budget is provided below, and assumes presentation on ten (10) nights of the fair.

There is great flexibility in budgeting for this event. For example, the use of the auditorium facilities may be free of charge or nominal if reserved in advance. The primary expenses for most affiliates will be the admission tickets to the fair for the participants and the complimentary T-shirts.

The use of email or a web page to facilitate operations can create a substantial cost saving by eliminating photocopying and postage costs.

The amount of donated funds varies from year to year and is often less than projected. The Iowa Court Reporters Association and several county court reporter associations make regular yearly donations ranging from \$25-\$250. County bar associations have also been supportive of the event. Funding from individual law firms or attorneys is discouraged, but donations from interested legal organizations are encouraged. In the experience of the Iowa affiliate, demand to participate in the event each year often exceeds the number of available spots, so sponsorship by individual firms runs the risk of alienating many of the volunteers, such as solo practitioners. Other affiliates may decide that firm sponsorship is a useful source of fundraising.

Programs running on a smaller budget could elect to omit some of the complimentary items provided to the participants and/or audience. Instead of running the program every night of a fair, a committee could choose to perform the trial only a few times or even just once during the fair. Often, once the fair space is reserved for a free public performance, the fair will donate a quantity of tickets to help facilitate the event. Other fairs may not do so and the tickets will be at the committee's expense. Smaller venues eager for additional programming may be more inclined to provide complimentary tickets, if tickets are required. .

**Sample Budget**

Projected 2003 Expenses:

Copying of materials and brochures	\$300
Postage	\$300
Tickets to State Fair for participants	\$500
Parking for judges, lawyers and court reporters	\$200
T-shirts for jurors, moderators, volunteers	\$850
Equipment rentals	\$250
Meeting expenses, including conference calls	\$400
<u>Advertising</u>	<u>\$400</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3200</b>

Income:

YLD Executive Committee	\$1910
Fundraising	\$250
<u>ABA/YLD subgrant</u>	<u>\$1000</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$3160</b>

#### **d. Expenses and Acquisitions**

##### **1. Tickets to the Fair**

Our committee provides participants and their guest with two complimentary tickets to the Fair. The tickets can be purchased in advance at a discount at many fairs. Complimentary parking passes are also provided if needed. Court reporters especially appreciate access to close parking in order to get their equipment to the venue site.

##### **2. T-shirts**

The volunteers and the six members of the jury all receive complimentary T-shirts bearing the YLD logo and a custom graphic to represent the Iowa State Fair. Different colors are chosen each year, as many participants come to the event year after year.

##### **3. Souvenirs**

It is customary at the Fair to provide inexpensive souvenirs to the audience members. Items used in the past have included pencils, paper fans, and the current item is a “Rule of Law” yardstick. These items can be ordered in bulk and customized for a relatively low cost.

##### **4. Printing**

A program is printed each year with the names of the sponsors and participants. Free legal brochures are also made available on a table near the front of the auditorium. The Iowa Bar Association provides the committee with copies of its most current brochures and pamphlets free of charge.

##### **5. Mock Courtroom Equipment Rentals**

The Iowa YLD rents props to set up a mock courtroom, including: tables for counsel, a podium and chair for the judge, tables and chairs for the court reporters and witnesses, table skirting, a flag, and a microphone system. Many of these items could be purchased and used from year to year, or the committee may be able to have these items donated.

##### **6. Miscellaneous Expenses**

The committee has recently lowered its operating costs by emailing copies of the mock trial problems and courtroom instructions to many of the participants. Postage, photocopying and long-distance telephone calls are also expenses incurred annually.

### **III. Implementation**

#### **A. Timetable**

An affiliate should begin planning this project at least 12 months in advance when implementing it for the first time. If the event is renewed, a shorter planning schedule of 6 months should work subject to making arrangements with the fair officials for an appropriate venue. This project is seasonal, and the planning and preparation will depend largely on when your state holds its state fair, and the size of your committee.

**1. Fall-Winter:** Committee meets to divide duties and discuss case topics for the civil and criminal cases and the preparation of audience-friendly jury instructions. Fundraising efforts to target local bar associations and legal organizations are formulated and letters are sent to potential funding sources. The committee reviews the evaluations from previous years; discusses potential expansion or changes to the program. Other duties include coordination with other YLD branches on acquisition of updated legal pamphlets and other useful materials. If this is the first time for the program, contact should be initiated at this time with the fair venue to check on reserving a site for the program.

**2. Spring:** Recruitment of judges, attorneys and court reporters to fill out the schedule of trials begins. Articles or announcements begin to appear in the state's legal newsletters and magazines. The committee finalizes the case materials and performs test trials to work out problems with materials. Contacts are renewed with State Fair personnel to make arrangements for facility, rental equipment and advertising. Other duties include re-ordering of supplies, T-shirts and other items. Fundraising efforts should be continued during this time, if needed.

**3. Summer:** Informational packets are prepared for the trial attorneys, judges and court reporters that will participate in the trials. Moderators are assigned for each night of the fair. Final program is sent to the printer. T-shirts, booklets and pamphlets are delivered to the fair. Coordinate with fair officials and general services to set up courtroom model, speakers and sound system, etc.

#### **B. Recruitment and Training of Volunteers/Personnel**

The YLD State Fair *Trial By Jury* Committee in Iowa is staffed by 15-20 persons selected to serve on the committee by ISBA leadership. An affiliate could seek volunteers wishing to serve on the committee, especially persons from distant areas of the state that would be willing to travel to the fair location. The committee may 1) be distinct from the participants in the trial, who would be recruited from the bar, or 2) the committee may wish to select its size with sufficient numbers to put on the trial itself and not recruit additional members from the community.

If the committee is serving in an oversight capacity alone, its recruiting efforts should attempt to locate attorneys who can make a positive impression about the legal profession on the public. Our volunteer attorneys include notable practitioners, married couples, and YLD members fresh out of law school. Their trial skills illustrate the commitment to excellence in representation embodied by our bar association.

Judges are normally recruited by email, and participation from judges across the state, on both the federal and local level is encouraged. Magistrates, administrative law judges and associate judges are often recruited as well. Many members of the judiciary find this event a fun way to connect with the general public.

Our committee invites a local court reporter to serve as a liaison on the committee in order to secure recruitment of court reporters. Court reporter contacts can be made in a variety of ways. The affiliate may wish to begin by contacting a state court reporter association, which works with both private and

government groups. Often the reporters have their own organizations that meet on a regular basis and can provide information about the event. Attorneys on the committee may wish to contact specific reporters they have worked with in the past. Caution should be taken not to alienate or isolate other groups that may not have an inside connection to the committee. The reporters bring their reporting equipment to the fair and show the audience how it works. The court reporting community also brings materials to encourage young people to consider a career in court reporting.

Other recruiting ideas include the wide variety of paralegal associations, giving paralegals the opportunity to play the role of witnesses or bailiffs. Local colleges with business, pre-law and paralegal programs may also be interested in participating. The satellite members of the legal community are a great source of support, so do not forget the bar association staff, court attendants and administrative personnel at law offices. These individuals are often very well informed about the procedures and provide fresh perspectives on the nature of legal education.

Another great source of volunteers is from your local high school and/or junior high mock trial programs. Our program allows the state champions from both divisions (high school and junior high) to present a modified version of their mock trial on two nights of the fair. Students with mock trial experience are often excited to volunteer to play the roles of witnesses. Entire families often attend to see their students perform, and in a rural state, it is not unusual to have an entire small town arrive at the program to cheer on their mock trial team.

### **C. Publicity**

The committee places an announcement of the nightly event in the complimentary fair schedule that is passed out at the gates and included in the local newspaper. A large sandwich or signboard was purchased several years ago that sits outside the venue during the day to announce the time and place of the event.

The committee experimented with paid advertising in the largest state newspapers, and found this to be cost prohibitive and ineffective at drawing in new audiences. Print media that offers an event calendar or listing of community activities may be willing to list the time and place of the event free of charge. The effectiveness of such advertising may differ from community to community, however, and this should not be ruled out entirely. There are a variety of ways to advertise the event without spending precious funds; the depth of promotion should be tailored to the size of the event.

Publicity is generated in the legal community by writing articles about the event for the Iowa Lawyer, a publication mailed monthly to all bar members. It is useful to have photographs from previous years and quotations from participants and audience members. Our Lady Justice logo appears next to our articles and is displayed prominently in our materials to increase recognition and awareness of the program.

### **D. Day-to-Day Operations**

This event is seasonal. The primary planning duties take place in the months immediately preceding the Fair. Committee members maintain regular monthly contact with meetings and emails.

Several nights before the fair begins, a committee representative should return to the venue to ensure that the materials are there, clearly labeled in a place that all committee members have been instructed to report. Introduce yourself to the staff at the venue and provide them with a contact number and information about how the event will take place. Ask if there is a location for storing items, and where the restrooms are located, in case persons wish to change clothing in preparation for the event.

The moderator scheduled to emcee the event should arrive approximately one half-hour prior to the scheduled start time, in order to set up the courtroom and greet the volunteer participants as they arrive and provide them with direction.

The moderator and their guest can set up the tables, chairs, witness stand, jury box, literature, etc. It is useful to have a guest accompany you to stand outside the venue shortly before the event and pass out paper fans or other promotional items to remind people that the event is about to begin. As the participants arrive, show them where to sit and brief them on the program.

At the scheduled start time, or shortly thereafter, the emcee should welcome the audience members, introduce themselves and explain what the program is about, that it is sponsored by the Young Lawyer's Division of the state bar association, and provide a little background about how long the event has been hosted here. Tell the audience how long the program is anticipated to last and that jury volunteers will receive a free T-shirt. Explain that the jury will need to stay for the entire trial, and then ask for six volunteers. It is reasonable to allow children of an appropriate age level to serve as jurors. The jury is then seated in the jury box, which can be a set of chairs closest to the courtroom itself.

After the jurors are selected, the emcee should formally introduce the judge, attorneys, court reporters and witnesses. The emcee can then turn the program over to the judge, who commences with the trial. Time limits are provided for the attorneys (five minute openings and closings, no more than seven minutes to direct and cross a witness). When the closing arguments are done, the judge instructs the jury, and the emcee guides the jury to a corner or hallway and gives them approximately five minutes to deliberate. While the jury is deliberating, the court may take questions from the audience, or poll the remaining audience members to see what their verdict would be. When the jury returns, the verdict is read aloud and court is dismissed. The participants should plan to remain for another five to ten minutes to field questions from the audience.

#### **IV. Evaluation and Impact**

To evaluate the continuing success of the program, the moderators fill out an evaluation for each night of the fair, indicating the number of audience members and the types of questions asked. A comment and suggestion box is usually placed near the door for audience members to make suggestions. The committee meets in the fall to discuss areas that need improvement or change. Examples of previous suggestions include allowing children to serve on the jury, altering a civil trial with a criminal one on various nights of the fair, use of real law enforcement officers to play the roles of police and investigators, and the desire of the audience to see judges and attorneys from their region of the state. There are often requests for particular types of legal information to be made available, such as small claim forms or rosters of attorneys that practice in particular areas, or information about how to contact pro bono attorneys and legal services.

The committee has recently expanded the scope of the project to include mock trial performances and is experimenting with the Trial by Jury format in county fair settings. Our preliminary research has led to the conclusion that a one-night trial at a county fair would draw enough interest to put on the event in such a venue. Another popular adaptation is to provide 4-H or other youth groups that participate in county fairs with mock trial problems about agriculture, farming, etc. The committee provides training on how to do a mock trial and the students themselves can put on the program with special mock trial problems geared to their age level.

The *Trial by Jury* project continues to draw crowds at the state fair, and provides the legal community with an opportunity to meet and have fun in a non-adversarial forum. The most popular nights at the fair are on weekends, when crowds tend to be larger. Most audience members are drawn to the program via advertising at the event itself. Most audience members will help themselves to a program as well as the free literature upon

arrival. When the audience is told that jurors will have to remain for the duration of the program, approximately one hour, many decline the opportunity to be a juror. However, many individuals return on multiple nights to sit on the jury.

Attendance numbers from 2002 indicate a low attendance of 40 individuals on a Tuesday night, and a high attendance of 150 people on a Saturday night. According to the moderator evaluations, approximately one-half of the audience members took free legal information with them when they left. The free souvenirs are gladly accepted by the majority of those in attendance.

## **V. Bibliography/Other Resources**

If you would like a sample packet of materials used by the Iowa YLD, please send an email to [awsmith@mchsi.com](mailto:awsmith@mchsi.com) and state in the subject line "Request for State Fair Packet."

Affiliate Contact: Alison Werner Smith  
Bremer Building  
120 ½ East Washington Street  
Iowa City, IA 52240-3976  
319-337-9606

Affiliate: Iowa State Bar Association  
Young Lawyer's Division  
521 East Locust Street, Third Floor  
Des Moines, IA 50310

## Web Sites of Interest

[www.iowastatefair.org](http://www.iowastatefair.org)

The place where it all began....

[www.life.com/Life/classicpictures/statefairs](http://www.life.com/Life/classicpictures/statefairs)

A great collection of historical photographs from state fairs across the nation.

[www.cyberstatefair.com/State%20fairs.htm](http://www.cyberstatefair.com/State%20fairs.htm)

Contains links to almost every state and territory fair home page in the United States.

[www.fairsnet.org](http://www.fairsnet.org)

Western Fairs Association website with news and information about new developments in state fairs.

### **A Place in Time: Historical Highlights of the Iowa State Fair**

The internationally-acclaimed Iowa State Fair is the single largest event in the state of Iowa and one of the oldest and largest agricultural and industrial expositions in the country. Annually attracting hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world, it is a "celebration of excellence," the real heartbeat of the Midwest, unequaled and unduplicated.

The inspiration for the original novel "State Fair" by Iowan Phil Stong, three motion pictures and Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway musical, Iowa's ag-extravaganza is without question the country's most famous state fair. It is also billed as "America's Classic State Fair" because it features all of the traditional events expected in a state fair, from farm machinery and food exhibits to Grandstand shows and competitive events.

Throughout its history, the Fair has been a unique institution, serving to educate, inform and entertain people from all walks of life. It is an outstanding agricultural showplace, the home of one of the world's largest livestock shows. Also home to the largest arts show in the state, the Fair showcases visual and performing arts with a variety of special exhibits and activities.

Each year hundreds of manufacturers and industrial representatives clamor to rent coveted exhibit space. In addition to its tremendous growth in agriculture and industry, the Fair is also an entertainment mecca for Iowa and the Midwest. Current programs include superstar stage shows, approximately \$350,000 worth of grounds entertainment offered free with gate admission, fireworks, auto and horse races, a 10-acre Midway, all kinds of competition, plus hundreds of displays, demonstrations and special activities.

In 1881 historian James Wilson noted that, "One of the most valuable effects of the State Fair is the fraternizing, humanizing consequences of bringing our people together. . . .No one meets and mingles with 20,000 Iowa men, women and children on the Fairgrounds - the only place they can be brought together - without growth of sympathy." Certainly this is even more relevant today, when the pace of modern life tends to isolate individuals even more from their neighbors. The Fair continues to draw nearly one million Iowans together each year. **Reprinted from:**  
**<http://www.iowastatefair.com/historical.html>**

