

Great weather, outstanding entertainment made for successful 2018 Illinois State Fair

September 7 2018 3:56 PM

SPRINGFIELD – Excellent weather conditions, an outstanding Grandstand lineup, and an increase in vendor sales made for another successful year at the Illinois State Fair.

Preliminary estimates show a total of 369,144 fairgoers passed through the gates for the 2018 fair, bringing in \$1,598,626 in admission and parking revenue during the fair's 11-day run. Attendance was down just eight percent compared to 2017's outstanding fair attendance numbers.

"We are very proud of what we offered fairgoers during this year's state bicentennial celebration at the Illinois State Fair," said State Fair Manager Luke Sailer. "We once again provided family-friendly, affordable entertainment for our fairgoers. From free concerts, to harness and auto racing in the Grandstand, to the fair's first-ever roller coaster, we offered attractions for every member of the family."

The highest attended day of the 2018 Illinois State Fair was Kids Day on Saturday, August 11th (44,209 attendees), while the lowest attendance day was Senior Citizen and Scout Day on Monday, August 13th (24,824 attendees). The biggest increases in attendance year-over-year occurred on Agriculture Day on Tuesday, August 14th (an increase of 4,974 attendees from 2017) and Democrat Day on Thursday, August 16th (an increase of 3,423 attendees from 2017).

Each year, the Illinois State Fair provides a tremendous economic impact to the city of Springfield and surrounding communities. "I've been attending the Illinois State Fair my entire life," said Ag Director Raymond Poe. "I've seen firsthand the number of people this fair puts to work, from inside the fairgrounds to outside the fairgrounds. Not only that, but the people who come to the fair patronize our local restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and other area tourist attractions, which has a direct impact on our local economy."

The most recent economic impact study conducted by the University of Illinois Regional Economics Applications Laboratory shows the Illinois State Fair contributes

\$86 million in business volume to the local economy. This includes \$35 million for wages and salaries and \$2.67 million in state sales tax revenue.

Vendor sales receipts currently up year-over-year

Fairgoers also appear to have spent more money at this year's fair than they did in 2017. According to the Illinois Department of Revenue (DOR), sales receipts and taxes collected from vendors at the Illinois State Fair are higher than they were at the same time last year. As of August 31, 2018, DOR says sales receipts total \$1,392,497.21 and it has collected \$87,036.01 in sales taxes from fair vendors, both up 16 percent year-over-year. Many vendors may continue to submit sales receipts through December 31.

More than 50,000 attend Grandstand concerts

The Illinois State Fair sold 51,675 tickets to nine Grandstand concerts throughout the 2018 fair. Luke Combs drew the biggest crowd this year, with 11,868 tickets sold. The next biggest Grandstand concert was Thomas Rhett, with 8,605 tickets sold. However, that concert was canceled because of storms after opening act Danielle Bradbery performed, and ticket holders are in the process of receiving refunds. Foreigner with Joan Jett and the Blackhearts also drew a huge crowd, with 7,327 tickets sold, as did Illinois native Brett Eldredge, with 6,838 tickets sold. Overall, the 2018 Illinois State Fair Grandstand lineup created \$1,824,537 in total ticket revenue.

About the methodology

Attendance was determined based on the number of tickets purchased and turned in at the gates. This takes into account anyone who contributed to the commerce of the Illinois State Fair. As in previous years, a formula provides multipliers, based on national averages, to count visitors who cannot be tracked by a ticket due to the fair's various free admission days.

Below is the attendance breakdown per day at the 2018 Illinois State Fair:

Date & Theme	Attendance
Thursday, August 9 – Preview Night	31,756
Friday, August 10 – County Fair and Horse Racing Day	32,371
Saturday, August 11 – Kids Day	44,209
Sunday, August 12 – Veterans Day	36,176
Monday, August 13 – Senior Citizen and Scout Day	24,824
Tuesday, August 14 – Agriculture Day	39,310
Wednesday, August 15 – Governor's Day	25,915
Thursday, August 16 – Democrat Day	28,476
Friday, August 17 – First Responders Day	28,500
Saturday, August 18 – Park District Conservation Day	39,961
Sunday, August 19 – Family Day	37,646
TOTAL	369,144