

OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE OF THE UTAH STATE FAIR

Since April, our community has been deeply involved with the future of the Utah State Fairpark. If you may recall, the actual ability of the Fairpark to host this year's Utah State Fair was called into question because several buildings were deemed unusable for safety concerns.

Things have been happening, and the *Utah State Fair* is happening next month: starting on Thursday, September 4th and ending on Sunday, September 14th.



What was and What is

For many years, the Fairpark Community has had a love/hate relationship with its namesake, the Utah State Fairpark. We love the Fairpark, both for its prominent role in our community and what it represents for the entire State. We've also kind of hated the place as we've watched its building deteriorate and as the Utah State Fair seemed to be diminishing in terms of relevance. For many of us in the community, the annual Utah State Fair, for a couple of weeks each year, defines our community. But for the rest of the year, this big chunk of land in our community is, with its fences, inaccessible and, visibly, a kind of barren, depressing thing to look at. We've known that it could be better; we've feared that it might become worse.

Things came to a head this last session of the Utah State Legislature when Utah State Fair made urgent request for more than a million dollars – almost twice as much as its usual request for State support. The immediate cause for this funding request was the result of low attendance at last year's Utah State Fair because of bad weather. But in a larger sense, not for the first time, the Legislature was confronted with reality that the nonprofit organization it had created several decades ago

to operate the annual Utah State Fair without government funding was not meeting that mandate. In fact, because of the Legislature's failure to invest in the upkeep of the buildings and other facilities, the Fairpark's role in hosting the annual Utah State Fair and other events is not fiscally viable.



What to do?

The Utah State Fair actually is an independent nonprofit corporation, which is contracted by the Utah State Government to operate the annual Utah State Fair.

Photo shows renovation activities on one of the barns.

On July 14, 2014, the Utah State Fairpark issued a Press Release titled "Utah State Fairpark Board of Directors announces Renovation Proposals which include a Real Salt Lake Minor League Soccer Stadium". Attached, on the next page, is a copy of that Press Release. The press release describes proposed changes to the Fair Park, which include a new soccer stadium, a new expo building, and updated rodeo grounds, all of which would help the site fulfill the goal to be a year-round, sustainable facility. The State Fair Park Board will be meeting with the Governor and his staff to these changes, and hopefully move forward to much anticipated changes to the Fairpark grounds. This will be a developing story, so check back on our homepage for the latest news.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UTAH STATE FAIRPARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNOUNCES RENOVATION PROPOSALS WHICH INCLUDE A REAL SALT LAKE MINOR LEAGUE SOCCER STADIUM

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Soccer stadium, new expo building and updated rodeo grounds would help fulfill goal to be a year-round, sustainable facility

SALT LAKE CITY – Friday, July 18, 2014 – The Utah State Fairpark Board of Directors announced proposals to enhance and renovate the Fairpark. The cornerstone of the proposed renovations will include a 5,000- to 8,000-seat, multi-use sports stadium. The announcement came in response to a recent study commissioned and prepared by the State Division of Facilities Construction & Management (DFCM) and CRSA, Zions Bank Public Finance, Integra Realty Resources, Ensign Engineering and Landmark Title.

“We thoroughly reviewed the study and it is our position that investing in the Fairpark is the most economically and culturally prudent approach to ensure the Utah State Fair and the Fairpark continue to contribute to the community for future generations.” said Roger Beattie, chairman of the board. “Construction of an exposition building, improving and expanding the rodeo grounds, and adding a multi-use sports stadium to the Fairpark would be strong assets to the Fairpark’s success; and we are pleased to announce that a proposal for the stadium has already been received.”

Real Salt Lake owner, Dell Loy Hansen, has submitted a proposal to the Utah State Fairpark Corporation to form a public/private partnership to construct the stadium. The new stadium would be the home field for Real Salt Lake’s minor league (USL) affiliate. The goal is to have the stadium completed in time for the 2016 season.

“We are excited about the possibility of Mr. Hansen bringing a new team and stadium to the Fairpark,” said Michael Steele, executive director of the Utah State Fairpark. “A stadium and team at the Fairpark would be an incredible addition to the community.”



CRSA's recent study on the Fairpark presented four scenarios the state could explore: 1) moving the Fair to a new, permanent location at a cost of approximately \$160 million; 2) improving the existing Fairpark with a series of renovations to existing buildings totaling approximately \$35 million; 3) adding additional facilities, including an expo center, expanded rodeo facility, and sports stadium for approximately \$44 million and 4) what CRSA coined as the "Highest & Best Use", selling the Fairpark to real estate developers for \$18.1 million.

"The Utah State Fairpark Board of Directors urges the State of Utah to invest in the Fairpark to preserve this invaluable economic and cultural resource and allow the Utah State Fair to become self-sufficient as mandated by the state," said Beattie. "Those who come to the Fair and other events at the Fairpark understand the great benefits the Fair and Fairpark bring to the entire State of Utah, and we invite those who haven't visited the Fair or the Fairpark to come experience it this year."

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