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COUNTY FAIR AND EXPO SEEKS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

How can the Fairgrounds & Exposition Center improve services and public awareness in the Future? How will the facilities look and operate? And, how can a sustainable financial platform be built?

These are just some of the questions being asked by the Board, staff and consultants to form a strategic master plan which will serve as a guideline for future operations.

The planning process was recently initiated and involves the general public, users of the Fairgrounds and stakeholders, and public officials. Staff and consultants scheduled meetings and interviews over the past few weeks with the aim to receive opinions and ideas from a broad cross section of Clatsop County residents.

The consulting firm of Maul Foster Alongi, Inc. is leading the four month effort, led by local resident Bill Cook, and John Nelson from the firm's Portland office. Bill was formerly with the Port of Astoria.

Gary Friedman, Manager of the Fairgrounds, is working closely with the consultants and coordinated the interviews. His hope is to have a recommended plan ready by early in 2009.

To better serve County residents the Board intends to consider and scrutinize several alternatives before selecting a preferred plan. Their goals include financial sustainability; improved facilities; efficient use of land; safety; environmental impact; and appearance.

The Clatsop County Fair & Expo is located on 109 acres overlooking the Walluski River, just three miles from Astoria. The facilities include the 15,000-square-foot exhibit hall, a 40,000-square-foot indoor arena that seats 1,800 spectators; hard-surface parking for 1,000 cars; ample close-in parking for exhibitors; horse barns for 100; spacious outdoor entertainment and carnival areas; and other facilities.

The Clatsop County Fair Board, a citizen committee appointed by the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, is charged by Oregon law with the management of the fairgrounds and county fair.

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