

Diagram showing possible marketing linkages with the fairgrounds.

The marketing, programming and financing of fairgrounds services and programming opportunities is important to the long term success of the fairgrounds. This section of the master plan will focus on marketing, programming and financing efforts that will enhance the presence of the fairgrounds for years to come.



recommendations

• Marketing Introduction

Introduction

The fairgrounds is a place that holds a great deal of importance in the Lake County community. Many generations of residents have enjoyed its facilities and grounds. However, as the fairgrounds grow and evolve to bring improved quality of life to the area, so must the marketing or selling of the fairgrounds be increased to maintain financial backing and community support

Currently, there are few efforts to market the fairgrounds. Word of mouth and actually driving by the site are the most common methods of finding out information about the grounds. With the exception of the fair in August, few banners or signs designate activities at the fairgrounds.

The marketing of the fairgrounds is something that takes some administration and coordination to facilitate and organize. The energies of individuals is what made the fairgrounds what it is today and will continue to make the fairgrounds a special place. Organizations such as the proposed Friends of the Fairgrounds will help to maintain this commitment of the community to the fairgrounds.



- Historical Trail Map
- Facilities Brochure

recommendations

A map that guides walkers through the fairgrounds to look at various architectural and natural details would be beneficial for fairgrounds users. The brochure or map could be found in “Map boxes” located throughout the fairgrounds and picked up at the users discretion. The Historical Trail should include:

- Architectural Details and History of Buildings
- Natural and Ecological Systems of the Fairgrounds
- History behind the creation and continuing use of the fairgrounds
- Landmarks or views that are significant throughout the site

The creation of a facilities brochure that outlines various facilities specifications would be beneficial to organizations that are considering the rental and use of fairgrounds buildings. The brochure could be mailed to local corporations, civic organizations, and any other organization or individual who might use the fairgrounds facilities. Included in the brochure should be:

- Building Specifications (Square Feet of usable space, heating and cooling availability)
- Cost of use
- Rules and Regulations for use (Including set-up and clean-up)
- Floor space diagrams of each facility
- Contact information for fairgrounds personnel

Develop a historical trail map that shows historic buildings and grounds.

Publish a facilities guide/ brochure to inform community of fairgrounds renting opportunities.



recommendations

Develop a yearly activity poster.

Start a fairgrounds scrapbook of history and tradition.

Launch the Lake County Fairgrounds Web site.

- Yearly Activity Poster and Fairgrounds Scrapbook
- Web Page

- Great opportunity to increase overall awareness of fairgrounds activities.
- Could be sponsored by a variety of local businesses and have listings of all major events at the fairgrounds.
- Could give information about contacting the fairgrounds for rental and use.
- A school competition might be held for the poster's art work each year, creating a sense of pride for community residents and children.

With such a long history of service to the community, the fairgrounds should have some way of cataloging pictures, stories and events. This might be done with the help of a Fairgrounds Scrapbook. The book could be a tangible product like a real scrapbook or it might be an e-scrapbook with the history, photos and stories published on-line. The on-line method has many benefits which will be outlined in the following recommendation of a Lake County Fairgrounds Web Page.

The Internet is one of the most powerful informational tools around today. Using this tool as a marketing technique for the fair would have many advantages including:

- Full Time Access (No office hours for easily answered questions)
- On-line reservations for space and renting of equipment
- Schedule checking and facilities calendar
- Location for fairgrounds history and "scrapbook"
- Opportunity for on-line donations to the "Friends of the Fairgrounds"
- Registration forms for fairgrounds events including the annual county fair.

Organization and management for web page could be performed by the Friends of the Fairgrounds.

• Community Networking Activities

recommendations

Word of mouth activities and community networking are very powerful tools in communities. The fairgrounds should continue this tradition through interaction with local businesses, clubs and civic organizations. Friends of the Fairgrounds members teamed in groups of two or three would be sent out to meet with community groups promoting the services of the fairgrounds. Some of these might include:

- Kiwanis Clubs
- Lions Clubs
- Labor Unions
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Churches
- Schools
- Corporate Offices

In addition to offering services to these organizations, the fairgrounds could also enter into long-term annual contracts for organizational events such as picnics, concerts and exhibits/shows. These long term contracts would add stability to the Fairground's financial situation and generate a steady flow of income.

Develop community networking opportunities



recommendations

- Introduction
- Current Usage

Introduction

The importance of programming cannot be overstated. Even with physical improvements that are unique to the Lake County Fairgrounds, success will only be determined through programming efforts. What is programming? It is a variety of things including:

- Fairgrounds sponsored events such as the fair itself.
- Events that are brought into the fairgrounds by outside vendors such as auctions and other events.
- Events that occur by public use such as family picnics and fishing at the lake.
- Programs that come about because of partnerships such as workshops and other learning activities.

Ultimately, the programming should drive the physical and administration development of the fairgrounds. This has been indicated in this plan by the referencing of physical plan improvements with programming improvements.

You have told us there is a tremendous potential for new programming as well as a market to use the new programming. It is essential to harness that energy to create new programming initiatives for the fairgrounds.

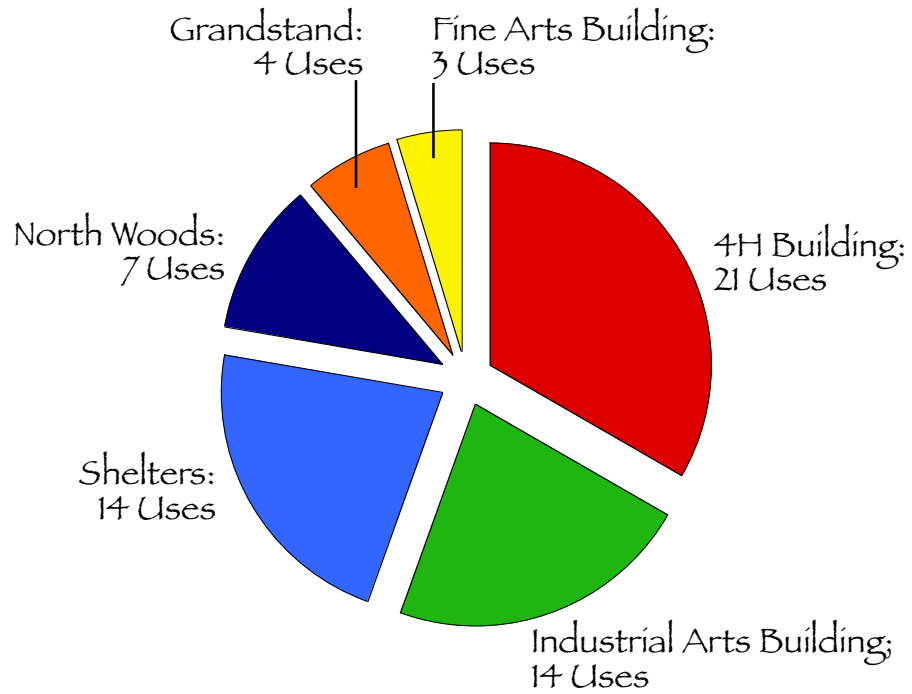
Current Usage

The Lake County Fairgrounds is currently a very active place. Many activities of a wide-ranging variety can be found on the grounds. Some events include a fee for use and for others, no fee was charged. The following page documents the 1999 usage for the fairgrounds.

Programming recommendations will address the current uses as well as looking at uses that have not been “discovered” yet.

recommendations

Programming Plan
Marketing, Programming &
Finance Initiatives



Building Use Chart



recommendations

- Weekend Zoo
- Musical Concerts

- Firearm Education
- Fishing Contests

Create a “Weekend Zoo” learning opportunity.

The “Weekend Zoo” could be a unique opportunity for the showing of animals during other times than the fair. The weekend zoo could take place in the animal barns and provide young 4H participants with “early practice” for the fair events. The zoo would also be a tremendous event for families to come and see on the weekend.

Encourage more musical concert opportunities.

With large open spaces, the potential exists for concerts of a variety of musical types. Some recommendations include:

- Acoustical Shows with no power needed. Might be held on the South Hill.
- Variety Shows in the Arena area
- Indoor recitals at the 4H building
- Outdoor Choir Concerts and Sing-a-longs

Coordinate “Firearm Community Education Days.”

- Programming to educate children and adults about the dangers of gun use
- Would be both beneficial to the participants as well as the community.
- Firearm Community Education Days could be held in conjunction with Elementary, Middle and High School Field Trips to the fairgrounds.
- Potential exists to combine Firearm Community Education Days with Gun and Knife Shows held at the Fairgrounds (3 were held in the 4H building in 1999.)
- Possible coordination with local NRA chapters.

Stock the lake and offer fishing contests.

- Stocking the lake will create unique opportunities for local residents to enjoy the fun of a fishing outing.
- Local Department of Natural Resource professionals could be brought in to help with Wildlife and Fish education as well as helping with the stocking of the lake itself.
- Contests could be held throughout the year with a potential for ice fishing as well.

- Battle Reenactments and Pow-Wows
- Scouting Events

recommendations

With the rolling terrain of the fairgrounds offering a variety of topography, Battle reenactment would be an excellent opportunity for increased facility usage. These reenactment could be held for a variety of time periods and utilize many of the fairgrounds buildings. In addition to the actual reenactment of the battle, events could be held that tie into a consistent theme of the event.

Another opportunity for cultural programming would be the hosting of Pow-Wow events. Many Pow-Wows require the same kind of facilities that are currently in place at the fairgrounds such as restrooms, large open spaces and a natural setting.

The natural setting of the North Woods area and the terrain of the lake and South Hill area make the fairgrounds an excellent site for large scouting events. These events could be weekend long events with cookouts and camping throughout the fairgrounds. Several of the fairgrounds buildings could be used for activities during the campouts.

Encourage battle reenactment and pow-Wow groups to come to the fairgrounds.

Develop relations with local scouting troops to offer camping and other activities.



recommendations

Offer winter recreation opportunities.

Develop playground “Play Day” opportunities

- Winter Recreation
- Playground “Play Day”

The terrain of the fairgrounds makes the site a great location for a host of winter recreation activities. Some of these activities could be:

- Snow sledding on South Hill.
- Ice-fishing on the lake
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Ice-skating and hockey

Playgrounds are excellent areas for families to come together and offer environments for outdoor enjoyment and use. The fairgrounds currently has a playground that is adequate for the needs of the community. Programming consideration should be given to the creation of a “Saturday Play Day” where local churches, youth groups and service organizations hold community play days for Lake County residents. These days would give parents an opportunity to join their kids in organized activities.



The fairgrounds playground area could be home to a variety of active programming.

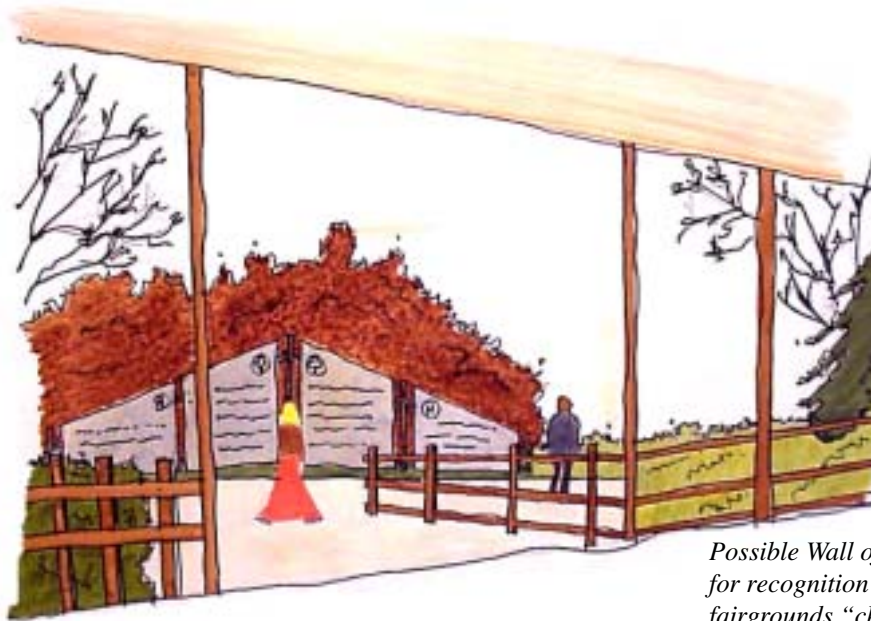
- Square Dancing
- Wall of Fame

recommendations

- ❑ Fairgrounds fills square dancing's need for large open spaces with the current 4H barns.
- ❑ These structures, when enclosed in some fashion (possibly garage doors), would prove to be excellent spaces for autumn square dances and hayrides.
- ❑ Possibilities also exist for Hayride/Fall festivals/square dancing contests.
- ❑ Instills pride in community by offering space for public recognition.
- ❑ Would be a permanent structure that would list 4H award winners, fairgrounds "champions" or extraordinary volunteers and any other needs for recognition.
- ❑ Could also serve as a backdrop to picture taking of 4H winners with their animals.

Offer square dancing in animal barns after enclosure.

Build a "Wall of Fame" for 4H and Fairgrounds "Champions."



Possible Wall of Fame option for recognition of special fairgrounds "champions."

recommendations

Develop community gardens for beautification and learning

• Community Gardens

- Get community members interested in the grounds of the fairgrounds
- Would take areas around buildings, trees and other spaces that would benefit from beautification and a small garden area.
- Gardens could be made of hearty plants that are decorative or actual food plants that produce a edible product.
- These gardens would be an excellent way to bring older members of the community into the fairgrounds facility.



Community Gardens could be used as an infill option between buildings.

• Catering Services
• Conventions and Reunions

recommendations

- ❑ The new kitchen area in the Fine Arts building could be rented out to catering organizations.
- ❑ Since the kitchen areas won't be used by fairgrounds activities all the time, the renting of the space will provide constant use and extra revenue.
- ❑ The catering could also be used for in-house events such as corporate outings and other eating engagements.

- ❑ Community members stressed the need for large meeting space for conventions and convocations.
- ❑ Large spaces found in the fairground's buildings give the potential for these large gatherings.
- ❑ The major building that would receive this kind of service would be the Fine Arts building.

Family reunions are often held during the summer months. As an option following the winterization of some fairgrounds buildings, especially the Fine Arts building, the fairgrounds could offer Winter family reunions. These reunions could be held in the large spaces of the Fine Arts buildings and revenue could be generated from the winter use of the buildings.

Offer use of kitchen facilities for catering services.

Attract large convocations and conventions

Offer space for winter family reunions.



recommendations

- Receptions
- Continuing Education

Market for local wedding receptions.

The Fine Arts Building when renovated will provide an excellent setting for wedding receptions in a unique historical building. These weddings could be administered by outside organizations that would come into the buildings and coordinate all the necessary arrangements including catering, set-up, tear-down and other related activities.

Create local partnerships for continuing education activities.

One of the assets that the fairgrounds has to offer is large spaces that are often not used to their full potential. One way to generate revenue from these spaces is offering a partnership with local continuing education activities. Some of these activities would need little physical improvement and others would require a greater amount of equipment. Some ideas include:

- Woodworking Shop (Learning opportunities in a variety of woodworking and construction areas)
- Gardening Classes (Using Community Gardening activities to drive the potential for learning opportunities)
- Automobile Maintenance Classes (With such large open space, there exists a tremendous potential for bringing a variety of automobile repair problems that could facilitate learning opportunities)

- Small Business Incubators
- Community School Activities

recommendations

- Start up businesses need space to operate. Fairgrounds has several areas of open space.
- These open spaces can be used for a variety of activities including distribution, organizing, layout, and manufacturing.
- The fairgrounds has large open spaces in several buildings (the promenade buildings come to mind) that would be potential spaces for business incubators.
- These spaces could be provided with electrical access and other building infrastructure as needed.
- Local businesses in turn would then provide payment for facility usage.

A great programming opportunity exists in a possible partnership with local schools. This partnership would consist of schools providing teaching and education services with the fairgrounds providing the outlet for those opportunities.

Some potential programming options (Each is detailed in a separate detail section)

- Design/Build Competition for Gazebo Buildings (This would be an opportunity for students at local high schools to gain both design and construction experience as well as proving their community fairgrounds with a beautiful design element in the form of a gazebo.)
- Environmental Education Areas (Since the fairgrounds has a variety of ecological systems i.e. the lake, wetlands, grassy areas, woods, their exists a tremendous potential for learning activities.)
- Local History Trail (A chronological history of the lake county region would be an excellent way to teach local history. The creation of a trail for learning would bring students to the fairgrounds early in life, giving them a commitment to the fairgrounds that would last a lifetime.)

Provide space and resources for small business incubators.

Coordinate Community/
School Activities



recommendations

- Grants
- Foundations

- Corporate Sponsorship
- Fundraising

Introduction

Developing financing opportunities is key to any improvement project within this plan. Therefore, it is essential to understand the positives and negatives of the four major types of funding opportunities other than direct fairgrounds revenue. The following chart summarizes some of these differences.

Positives

Negatives

Grants

- Help fund large projects
- Provide positive PR and press opportunities
- Possible to leverage local resources
- Do not need to be paid back

- Come with “strings” attached
- Require administration
- Lots of up-front effort w/no guarantee of return

Foundations

- Match generally not required
- Like to support local projects
- Provide positive PR for fairgrounds and foundation

- Lots of up-front effort w/ no guarantee of return
- Maybe subjected to an audit

Corporate Sponsorships

- “Free” money with no strings
- Provide positive PR and press opportunities
- Can fund large projects and have other resource contacts

- Must find willing corporation
- Lots of initial effort to secure partnership
- Must heavily promote sponsors
- Loss of control (Keep sponsors happy)

Fundraising

- Local effort
- Volunteer opportunities
- Community pride and potential for in-kind gifts

- Need Non-profit corporation
- Must manage lots of events



• Grants

recommendations

- Must determine who is responsible for writing and submission
- Must determine who will manage funds if they are awarded (This may be different based on activity.)
- If there is a requirement for matching funds it must be determined who will raise that match. Potential matches:
 - Equipment that is not in use but has tangible value.
 - Community services and work time
 - Administrative assistance
 - Other funding sources mentioned (foundations, corporations, fundraising)
 - Fraternal Organizations (Kiwanis, Lions, etc.)
 - Social/Service Groups
- Coordinate with local writing and graphic design professionals (pro bono work) to produce professional products for grant applications.

What organizational concerns are associated with grants and grant writing?



recommendations

• DNR Forestry Grants

Urban Forestry Grants

Indiana DNR

<http://www.state.in.us/dnr/forestry/htmldocs/grants.htm>

Division of Forestry

Urban Forestry Program

9245 N. Meridian St., Suite 118

Indianapolis, IN 46260

E-mail: inurbfor@indy.net

Urban Forest Conservation Grants

The Urban Forest Conservation (UFC) Grants are intended to help communities develop long term programs to manage their urban forests. Grantees may conduct any project that helps to improve and protect trees and other associated natural resources in urban areas. Community projects that target program development, planning and education are emphasized. Projects funded in the past include activities such as conducting tree inventories, developing tree maintenance and planting plans, writing tree ordinances, conducting programs to train municipal employees and the public, purchase or development of publications, books and videos, hiring consultants or city foresters, etc. Certified Tree Cities may spend up to 20% of the grant funds on demonstration tree planting projects. Local municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and state agencies are eligible to apply for \$2,000 to \$20,000.

Arbor Day Grant Program

Arbor Day Grants can be used to fund any type of activity which helps promote Arbor Day and the planting and care of urban trees. Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, but any event in March, April or May is eligible. Activities could include Arbor Day celebrations and events, educational workshops, public awareness campaigns, printing and distribution of printed materials, etc. State agencies, local municipalities and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for \$500 or \$1,000 grants.

Hometown Indiana Grants

The Hometown Indiana Grant program provides state funding for planting trees on public property or right-of-ways in urban areas. Applicants may also propose other types of projects which help develop urban forestry programs as described in the Urban Forest Conservation Grants above. Local municipalities and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for \$2,500 to \$20,000.

• Watershed and Flood Protection Grants

recommendations

Tree Steward Program Grants

The Tree Steward Program is an educational training program which can be conducted in any county in Indiana. A county sponsor such as a city or county government, conservation group or the county extension office can conduct the program. The program involves six training sessions of three hours each, which cover a variety of tree care and planting topics. After completion, attendees receive a Tree Steward Certificate and are encouraged to volunteer in their communities to assist with urban forestry projects. Grants of \$500 or \$1,000 are available to assist sponsors in starting county-wide Tree Steward programs. Grant funds can be used to hire speakers and purchase supplies, equipment and handouts.

Watershed and River Basin Planning and Installation

Technical and financial assistance is provided in cooperation with local sponsoring organizations, state, and other public agencies to voluntarily plan and install watershed-based projects on private lands. The program empowers local people or decision makers, builds partnerships and requires local and state funding contributions. The purposes of watershed projects include watershed protection, flood prevention, water quality improvements, soil erosion reduction, rural, municipal and industrial water supply, irrigation water management, sedimentation control, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement and create and restore wetlands and wetland functions.

Watershed plans involving an estimated Federal contribution in excess of \$5,000,000 for construction, or construction of any single structure having a capacity in excess of 2,500 acre feet, require Congressional committee approval. Other plans are approved administratively. After approval, technical and financial assistance can be provided for installation of works of improvement specified in the plans.

Indiana Natural Resources
Conservation Service

6013 Lakeside Blvd
Indianapolis, In 46278

<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/>



recommendations

• Foundations
• Corporate Sponsorships

Develop connections with foundations

- Establish a contact person at the foundation that will be a go between for fairgrounds questions and foundation concerns
- Develop a project statement that gives a specific goal to each project
- Outline ahead of time how funds will be managed and where the funds will reside
- Maintain a database of interactions with the foundation to insure that all bases are covered in the process
- Maintain a database of all foundations that might have applicability to the fairgrounds

Local Foundations

- Crown Point Community Foundation (219.662.7252)
- Legacy Foundation (219.736.1880)
- John W. Anderson Foundation (Valparaiso)

Attract local corporate sponsorships

- Establish a contact person a local corporations
- Maintain list of sponsors/potential sponsors of activities and events
- Review local chamber of commerce listings for corporations and contacts
- Make personal contacts with local businesses. Continue to keep corporations informed on your activities. They may have a change of situation and want to become involved at a later date.
- Ask about Fiscal Year key dates (Budget cycles, requests)
- Develop system for corporate sponsorship (levels of giving commiserate with levels of promotion)
- Present the opportunity for major sponsorships such as the name on a building
- Seek in-kind donations that might be used as leverage or matching for other funding opportunities. Many corporations will be eager to unload old machinery that has value but is not going to be used. They write it off as a tax deduction and the fairgrounds gets a “donation.”
- Request that corporations underwrite special functions such as banquets, etc.

• Individual Sponsorship and Fundraising

recommendations

- Make each campaign an effort that includes the community.
- Recruit volunteers for work for short periods of time. Heaping too much responsibility on one person could burn them out.
- Make an effort to find one or two “champions” of a project. They will be needed to keep motivation for the campaign.
- Create themes that relate with park issues such as “community barn raising” or “Save the Lake.”
- Offer specific opportunities for gifts and contributions. Possible items that could be sponsored include:
 - Community Bricks with names of donors
 - Trees that will grow in the fairgrounds environment
 - Supplies that assist with the maintenance of the fairgrounds
 - Picnic tables that would have a name plate of the donor on them.
- Whatever the fundraising approach taken, it is essential to remember:
- All volunteers must be rewarded in some fashion (dinner, etc.)
- The campaign must have an “angle” that the community associates with in terms of theme. “Save the Historic Fine Arts Building,” etc.
- Don’t forget the benefits of school organizations and service organizations that might be looking for service “hours.” They can be a great benefit to any effort that has a lot of busy work i.e. phone calling, running errands.
- Keep everyone in the loop. Meet often and keep good records of what is happening. Miscommunication can kill a good intentioned fundraising campaign
- Create partnerships with the County Commissioners and other local government officials for marketing opportunities and financial support.

Create “theme” fundraising campaigns and specific gifting opportunities.



