
Subject: State Fair's Onondaga Lake Exhibit takes First Place in National Competition Honoring the Best in Fairs & Expos

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STATE FAIR'S ONONDAGA LAKE EXHIBIT TAKES FIRST PLACE IN NATIONAL COMPETITION HONORING THE BEST IN FAIRS AND EXPOS

International Association of Fairs and Expositions Also Honors Dairy Cow Birthing Center, Communications Efforts for the 12-day Event

The Great New York State Fair earned seven awards in the annual competition operated by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE), Acting Commissioner of Agriculture James B. Bays announced today. IAFE is the trade group representing more than 1,000 fairs, events, and expositions from around the world. The awards were announced at the event's annual convention in Las Vegas.

"The outstanding efforts of staff, in collaboration with many partners, produced first-class information and entertainment that was rightfully recognized during this national competition," said Acting State Agriculture Commissioner James B. Bays. "We are proud of the work that everyone did on these projects and grateful for the recognition. I thank our many partners for their hard work and dedication to providing high-quality exhibits at this year's Fair."

The Fair earned a first place prize for Best Solution-Based Communication Effort for its new exhibit "Onondaga Lake: A Fresh Gateway to the New New York." The exhibit, which occupied an entire wing of the Center of Progress Building at this year's Fair, showed Fairgoers how the work to remediate the lake is creating economic opportunity throughout the region and is helping restore fish and bird species to the lake habitat. A committee of more than a dozen non-profit, educational, government, and business organizations worked with the Fair to create the exhibit.

"This exhibit was the first of its kind at the Fair," said Cornelius B. Murphy, Jr., Ph.D., president of State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

(SUNY-ESF) and co-chair of the exhibit committee. "The New York State Fair partnered with all of us to develop a 2,000-square-foot exhibit that showed New Yorkers how coordinated remediation efforts between state and local partners at Onondaga Lake are changing the region and providing for future economic vitality. It is an extraordinary story of a community coming together to improve not only Onondaga Lake, but the quality of life in Central New York."

Another of the Fair's new exhibits also won a major national honor from IAFE. The New York Animal Agriculture Coalition's Dairy Cow Birthing Center earned second place in the agricultural competition for Fair and Sponsor/Partner Joint Exhibit Program. The center was packed with Fairgoers, anxious to witness a dairy cow giving birth to a baby calf. The center featured 30 births throughout the Fair with farmers and veterinarians on hand to answer questions about the birthing process and dairy farms in general. A live webcam of the birthing center, offered through Cornell University, allowed people at home to share in the excitement.

Jessica Ziehm, Executive Director of the New York Animal Agriculture Coalition (NYAAC), said, "The production of milk starts with the birth of a baby calf, and so it made sense to us to showcase this phenomenon at the State Fair, as NYAAC works to educate the public about modern dairy farms. Fairgoers wowed us with their interest in this exhibit and our farmers were thrilled to share their passion and commitment to the care of dairy cows with the public. We are honored with this recognition from the IAFE and thank the New York State Fair for partnering with us to provide this unique opportunity to the public."

The Fair's advertising and marketing efforts, created by its marketing firm, Pinckney Hugo Group of Syracuse, won several awards, including three first place awards.

- The Fair's television commercials for its advance sale and concert ticket sales efforts won first place in the television category;
- The Fair's e-mail newsletter announcing a special ticket sale for the Toby Keith concert won in the electronic newsletter category;
- All of the Fair's efforts to tie its marketing back to its mobile platform won for best mobile campaign;
- A full-page newspaper ad touting the availability of advance sale tickets won third place in the color newspaper ads category, and;
- A full-page magazine ad for advance sale tickets won third place in the magazine ad category.

"It is an honor to be recognized for the 2013 New York State Fair marketing efforts and agricultural exhibits," said Doug Pinckney, president of Pinckney Hugo Group. "Over the past few years, the Fair has received 24 international awards for its advertisements, creative design, website, media tours, social media efforts, mobile campaigns and new exhibits. Pinckney Hugo Group is proud to partner with the New York State Fair and help drive tourism in Central New York."

The Fair competed in the category of fairs and events with an attendance of between 500,000 and 1 million and these awards capped a successful Fair season. The Fair's effort to provide more programming on the west end of the grounds paid additional dividends.

"I can't say enough what a good thing the Cow Birthing Center was for the west end of the Fair," said Samuel Alivero, who owns the longtime Fair restaurant that bears his name. "It helped vendors. We saw good increases in sales and the public was happy to have the birthing center."

The New York State Fair, operated by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, runs from August 21 - September 1, 2014. Its mission is to showcase the best of New York agriculture while providing top-quality entertainment.

A year-round schedule of events is available on the Fair's website. Find The Great New York State Fair on Facebook, follow @NYSFair on Twitter, and enjoy photos from the Fair at Flickr.com/GreatNYSFair. Also, New Yorkers are invited to send their ideas for the Great New York State Fair at statefairideas@agriculture.ny.gov.

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