

# Schedule of Events for 2024 IAAF Convention

## “Do More In ’24”

### 113th Annual Convention

**Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs**  
Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Express  
Springfield Illinois

### Schedule of Events for 2024 Convention

All events open only to registered guests with a convention badge.

#### Thursday, January 12, 2024

- 8:30-11 AM Queen Registration—Downstairs  
Registration Desk—*Plaza Lobby*
- 1-5:00 PM Registration Desk Open
- 1:00 PM Queen Pageant Rehearsal—*Ballroom*
- 4-6:00 PM Carnival Amusement Safety Board Mtg. — *Winter Garden, 14th floor*
- 8-11 PM “Let’s Have Fun” Pre-convention hospitality and fun—*Capital View*  
—*12th floor*  
Sponsored by the Northern, Central and Southern Zones

#### Friday, January 13, 2024

- 8:00 AM Registration Desk Opens  
—*Plaza Lobby*
- 8:30 AM Queen Pageant Rehearsal – *Ballroom*
- 10:00 AM IAAF Board Meeting  
—*Lincoln Board Room*

1:30 PM Opening Session  
“Leadership By Design”  
*Special Guest Mark Sturgell, Growmark*  
Remarks by Illinois FFA President  
Thad Bergschneider

“What did your fair do differently in 2023?”  
Moderated by Bill Jennings, IAAF Director  
— Plaza FG — 1st Floor

- 3:00 PM **Trade Show opens with a reception.**  
Skinners Amusements hosting  
— *Plaza A-E*
- 6:00 PM Trade Show closes for the day

- 4:00 PM Fairs and Exposition Fund Meeting  
— *Capital VI - 3rd floor*  
— *Jeannette Watkins, IDOA*
- 5:30 PM Audit Committee Meeting  
— *Turquoise—2nd floor*

7:00 PM **Showcasing—Plaza H-J**  
**Drinks and Snacks Sponsored by**  
**Burnham & Flower Insurance,**  
**Illinois Wine by Tom & Pam**  
**Schahrer, Ice Cream by Prairie Farms**  
  
**MC: Kent Casson of Central**  
**Illinois Farm Network.**

Sound checks begin at 3:00 p.m.

**Associates who have hospitality rooms may be hosting during other hours than those listed for the trade show.**

#### Saturday, January 13, 2024

- 7:00 AM Registration Desk Opens—*Plaza Lobby*
- 7:30 AM “Have a Magical Morning Breakfast doors open. — *Plaza F&G*  
Tickets Required  
Sponsored by Luehrs Ideal Rides and Skinners Amusements  
Special door prize for breakfast participants — \$50 Cash
- 7:45 AM Opening remarks:  
IAAF President Jill Hardesty  
Pledge of Allegiance: Queen Paige Van Dyke  
Invocation: Queen Paige Van Dyke

- 8:15 AM **All non-ticket fair members and associates are welcome to join the meeting after breakfast.**
- 8:30 AM Welcome  
Jill Hardesty, IAAF President
- 8:45 AM Presentation of “Friend of Illinois County Fair” Awards, Ron Meyer  
Drawing for “Early Bird” door prize
- 9:00 AM Remarks: Illinois Department of Agriculture
- 9:30 AM **Larry Berry, Keynote Speaker,**  
presented by Luehrs Ideal Rides.
- 10:30 AM **Drawing**—All door prize winners must be present to win at the time of each drawing.
- 10:45 AM Secretaries and Treasurers Meeting  
—*Jeannette Watkins, IDOA—Plaza F&G*  
**Please visit the associate member rooms or trade show booths.**

- 8:30 AM Queen Pageant Rehearsal—*Ballroom*
- 11:00 AM Trade Show & Associate Rooms open  
—*Plaza A-E*
- 1:00 PM Afternoon Queen Pageant Preliminaries—*Ballroom*
- 1:30 PM Jr. Talent Competition—*Plaza H-J*
- 2:00 PM All Zone Meeting—*Capital View, 12th floor*
- 2:45 PM Past Presidents Meeting—*Capital View, 12 floor*
- 4:00 PM Trade Show closes
- 5:15 PM Past State Queen Dinner—*Plaza F&G*
- 6:00 PM Sr. Talent Competition—*Plaza H-J*
- 6:00 PM Catholic Mass  
—*Winter Garden, 14th floor*
- 7:00 PM Evening Queen Pageant Preliminaries  
—*Ballroom*
- 8:00 PM Registration Desk Closes

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#### Sunday, January 14, 2024

- 8:15 AM Protestant Worship -  
—*Winter Garden-14th floor*
- 9:00 AM Queen Pageant Rehearsal—*Ballroom*

- 8:50 AM Enjoy a Breakfast Sandwich & Coffee  
—sponsored by A Fantasy Amusements
- Convene for Round Tables—*Plaza F-G*  
Sponsored by Edwards Marketing & Grandstand Concerts and Illinois Tractor Pulling Association  
— Moderated by Jill Hardesty & Dave Hake
- 9:15 AM Roundtables: First Session
- Grant Writing 101  
— Mary Liz Wright & Terri Quinn
  - Ideas for Sponsorship  
— Boone County Fair
  - Bring Your Book & Let’s Compare  
— Effingham County
  - Weather Insurance — Robert Holmes
  - Marketing Your Fair  
— Leon Edwards
  - Are You Prepared? What If?  
— Brandon Oxley
  - Junior Fair Board — Todd Cotter
  - Livestock Meeting — Tom Moore
- 10:00 AM Roundtables: Second Session  
(Same Agenda as First Session)
- 11:00 AM Annual Business Meeting  
—*Plaza F-G*

**Please Register for Door Prizes**  
A Crowne Plaza Package for the 2023 IAAF Convention will be awarded.

Welcome - Jill Hardesty, IAAF President  
Minutes  
Introduction of Directors

### Committee Reports:

- Secretary-Treasurer report - Charlyn Fargo Ware
- Audit Committee report - Gary Mielke
- Grievance Committee - Tom Moore
- Advocacy Report - Bridget Dougherty
- Legislative Committee - Bill Jennings

Election of Officers

**Drawing for prizes donated by Swear Amusements and other prizes.**  
**All door-prize winners must be present to win.**

- 4:00 PM Doors Open for Banquet—*Plaza A-J*
- 5:00 PM Banquet Served
- 6:30 PM Queen Pageant Finals —*Ballroom*
- 9:30 PM Reception for the new Queen  
—*Lobby and Rosewood Dining Room*

#### Monday, January 15, 2024

- 8:00 AM IAAF Directors And Spouses  
Breakfast — *Ruby Room*
- 9:00 AM IAAF Directors Meeting—*Ruby Room*

## First County Fair

In medieval Europe, a “fair” was usually a religious gathering, but modern fairs are more about farming.

In the U.S., the first fair was held in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1807. It was basically just a sheep shearing demonstration and contest. It was the brainchild of sheep farmer Elkanah Watson, who simply wanted to promote better farming practices. Bolstered by its success, Watson began developing agricultural fairs that included contests and activities for the whole family.

At the heart of county fairs, in Watson’s day and today, are livestock shows, where judges inspect animals presented by local farmers for overall quality and award prizes to those with the best livestock. The friendly competition became wildly popular with the agricultural community of Massachusetts.

As word spread about the livestock shows and agricultural contests Watson hosted, other counties began to plan their own fairs. By the mid-1800s, county fairs were widespread across the eastern and midwestern states. Food vendors, baking contests, horse races, and games of chance were added to the rosters to entertain the hordes, and local merchants set up booths to sell their wares to the gathered crowds.

By 1841, Watson’s county fairs had grown so popular that New York announced the United States’s first state fair. The New York State Fair took place over two days in September in Syracuse, New York with the goal of furthering public education about agriculture and farming practices with livestock shows, lectures, and exhibits. The event was hugely popular, with an estimated attendance of between 10,000 and 15,000. Today, the New York State Fair is still a popular event, so much so that it now takes place over two weeks rather than two days.