

## Update on Utah State Fairpark's Financial Crisis

As reported in the February Gazette, the Utah State Fairpark, primarily as the result of nine rainy days out of the eleven days of last year's State Fair, is facing a financial crisis. Existing funds will allow the Fairpark to operate only until the end of March.



As a result, the Fairpark administration has approached the Utah Legislature for \$650,000 to cover operating costs from April to the end of the state's fiscal year, June 30, 2014.

In addition they have requested money to shore up the Fairpark's future budgets, such as covering revenue shortfalls when there is a smaller State Fair attendance than projected, such as happened last summer. This second request of \$600,000 would cover approximately four "rainy days" during the fair and compensate for lost revenues.

Both requests are for one-time funding.

Neither request covers the cost of upgrading the three barns that have been condemned. The repair of the barns, estimated to cost \$2.5 million, is not included in the Fairpark's emergency request. The rehabilitation of the barns is a separate financial issue that will be handled by the state's Division of Facilities Construction and Management, which is identified as a top priority by the state building board.

### *What Can Fairpark Community Residents Do?*

The continued operation of the Utah State Fairpark is a statewide issue, with the annual Utah State Fair being the preeminent event for Utah's agriculture community. Undoubtedly, the groups and associations that represent the various types of farming and ranching are weighing in on the issue.



Nonetheless, people living in the Fairpark Community can bring a unique perspective to the Fairpark's financial situation – the Fairpark is our neighbor and, to a large extent, defines the character of our community.

*Contact members of the Legislature's Executive Appropriations Committee.* With its 20 members being drawn from both the Senate and House of Representatives and from both the Democrat and Republican parties, the Executive Appropriations Committee has the ultimate responsibility for the Legislature's budget that will not be finalized until the session's last day – Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.

To see the Executive Appropriations Committee membership, with links to information on contacting individual members, [click here](#).

Note that both the Senator (Luz Robles) and Representative (Jennifer Seelig) who represent the Fairpark Community are members of Executive Appropriations. Contacting them by email is a good starting point. Senator Robles' email is [lrobles@le.utah.gov](mailto:lrobles@le.utah.gov). Representative Seelig's address is [jseelig@le.utah.gov](mailto:jseelig@le.utah.gov).

What should your message be? It could as simple as "Senator Robles (or just Luz), as a resident of the Fairpark Community, please know that I strongly support emergency funding for the Utah State Fairpark. Please convey my support to other members of the Executive Appropriations Committee." The same goes for sending a message to Representative Seelig (or just Jenn).

Or you can explain why the Fairpark is important you; e.g., you appreciate the green space or the historical buildings or perhaps you have a special memory concerning the Fairpark which you can share with them.

End the email with your name and, if you want, a phone number.

For more information, contact Steve Johnson at [steve.johnson@fairparkcommunity.org](mailto:steve.johnson@fairparkcommunity.org).