



# Board of Supervisors Memorandum

January 4, 2022

## Pima County Fair Commission and the Southwest Fair Commission

### History of the Pima County Fair and the Fair Commission

The first fair was held in Pima County in 1911 followed shortly by the formation of the Southern Arizona Fair Association, which occurred in 1915. The fair was cancelled in 1918 due to the pandemic and the impact of the waning days of World War and did not open again until 1929.

References to the Pima County Fair Commission as the operator begin in 1930 as it planned for the 1931 fair. This group ran the fair until 1959 (other than during World War II, 1943 – 1947). A 1959 report to the Board of Supervisors first provided for the operation of the Pima County Fair by a non-profit corporation.

The Pima County Fair moved to its current location in 1972 and the Pima County Fairgrounds today is comprised of a 640-acre event complex designed for diverse and multi-use to include outdoor concert and stage locations, exhibit buildings, equestrian facilities, animal and livestock arenas, motorized event arena, storage facilities, outdoor exhibit spaces, picnic areas, RV facilities and areas for out-door camping.

### The Pima County Fair Commission Structure

Board of Supervisors Resolution No.1974-124, adopted on September 17, 1974. created the Pima County Fair Commission. Arizona Revised Statute Section 11-258, *County Fair Fund; district fairs; operation of fair by corporation; county and state appropriations*, establishes the need for a County fair to be run by a non-profit corporation. For that reason, in 1975 the Southwestern Fair Commission (SFC) a non-profit, private corporation, was established to operate the fairgrounds and the Pima County Fair. The Articles of Incorporation of the Southwestern Fair Commission state, "[m]embership in this Corporation shall be confined to those persons appointed to the Pima County Fair Commission by the Board of Supervisors of Pima County." This statement is also included in the Bylaws of the Southwestern Fair Commission.

Until 2014, the Pima County Fair Commission was comprised of 5 members nominated by the Commission and appointed by a majority of the Board of Supervisors. Resolution 2014-56, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 3, 2014 expanded the Commission to included two members nominated by the County Administrator and appointed by a majority of the Board of Supervisors.

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The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors  
Re: **Pima County Fair Commission and the Southwest Fair Commission**  
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Individuals appointed to the Pima County Fair Commission are not the appointees of each individual member of the Board of Supervisors but are "appointed by a majority of the members of the Board of Supervisors." By past convention, there have been nominations made by each Supervisor but the appointment is made by a majority of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors provide direction to staff regarding the composition of the Pima County Fair Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan Leshner", with a stylized, cursive script.

Jan Leshner  
Chief Deputy County Administrator

JL/anc – November 29, 2021

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,  
Health and Community Services  
Diane Frisch, Director Attractions and Tourism