

KENTUCKY STATE FAIR BOARD

The Kentucky State Fair Board Special meeting began at 2:00 P.M. EDT, Wednesday, August 19, 2026. Chairman Ray Perry presided over the meeting at the Kentucky Exposition Center.

Members present: Mr. Ray Perry, Mr. Rocky Adkins, Mr. Cleo Battle, Mr. John Cox, Mr. Jimmy England; Secretary Holly Johnson, Mr. Jeremiah Jury, Mr. Joe O'Brien, Mr. Greg Pope, Ms. Sadiqa Reynolds, Mr. Dorsey Ridley, Mr. Lee Robey, Commissioner Jonathan Shell, Dr. Laura Stephenson, Mr. Jay Brent Tolle, Mr. Garrett Zimmerman

Absent: Mr. Hans Poppe

Also present: Mr. Mike Berry, Kentucky Venues; Ms. Ellen Benzing, Kentucky Venues; Mr. Mark Bowling, KDA; Mr. Nick Carter, UK College of Ag; Mr. Ian Cox, Kentucky Venues; Mr. Jeremy Cox, Prestige; Ms. Sarah Cronan, TAH Cabinet; Ms. Faith Cummings, Kentucky Venues; Ms. Jessica Dunkelberger, Kentucky Venues; Ms. Corinne Fetter, Kentucky Venues; Mr. Shawn Hensler, Kentucky Venues; Mr. Matthew Johnson, Kentucky Venues; Mr. Brad Kempf, Kentucky Venues; Mr. Jack Lyon, OVG; Mr. Travis Mayo, Office of the Governor; Mr. Kevin McCoy, Kentucky Venues; Ms. Christina Montanaro, OVG; Mr. Tim Postlethwait, Kentucky Venues; Mr. Brandon Reed, KDA; Ms. Sierra Rojas, Kentucky Venues; Ms. Donna Schneiter, TAH Cabinet; Ms. Laura Whitehead, Kentucky Venues

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M. on August 19, 2026, by Chairman Ray Perry.

SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Chairman Perry called on Ms. Faith Cummings to administer the Oath of Office to the new Kentucky State Fair Board members. Those members included:

- Mr. Rocky Adkins
- Mr. Joe O'Brien

Both members affirmed the oath, and they were formally welcomed to the Kentucky State Fair Board.

WELCOME

Chairman Perry welcomed everyone and expressed his appreciation to the board members for attending. Mr. Adkins explains that he is unable to attend in person because he is in Ashland, Kentucky, for the opening of a new horse track. He explained that this project represents a \$100M investment and is expected to create more than 200 jobs. It is a major event for Ashland, the region and the Commonwealth.

Chairman Perry noted activities surrounding the KY State Fair (KSF), noting that the grounds look great despite the disruption and activity associated with the event. Members participated in a tour of the new construction and were all impressed with the progress and the fact that the project is ahead of schedule and below budget.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Perry called on Ms. Jessica Dunkelberger to call roll. A quorum was present.

CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Perry called for consideration of the minutes from the July 23, 2026, KSFB meeting.

Mr. Greg Pope moved, and Mr. Dorsey Ridley seconded to:

“Approve the minutes as presented.” The motion carried.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Perry thanked the board members who reached out and noted their interest in serving on specific committees. Below are the committee assignments:

Executive Committee

- Ray Perry, Chairman
- Greg Pope, Vice Chairman
- Rocky Adkins
- Cleo Battle
- Hans Poppe
- Dorsey Ridley
- Jonathan Shell, Ag Commissioner

Finance and Budget Committee

- John Cox
- Secretary Holly Johnson
- Sadiqa Reynolds
- Lee Robey

NAILE Executive and Events Committee

- Jimmy England
- Jeremiah Jury- 4-H
- Joe O’Brien
- Dean Laura Stephenson
- Jay Brent Tolle
- Garrett Zimmerman – FFA

Each committee will select its own chair at its next scheduled meeting, with those meetings to be announced.

ELECTION OF BOARD SECRETARY

Chairman Perry called on Mr. Mike Berry who explained that there is a need to formally select a secretary of the board. The Kentucky State Fair Board is a corporation and therefore needs an elected secretary. The secretary does not have to be a board member under applicable statute. The CEO serves as treasurer of the board by statute. The secretary’s responsibilities include attesting to meeting minutes and performing related administrative duties. Ms. Jessica Dunkelberger is nominated for

secretary. Chairman Perry called for any other nominations; none were offered and nominations closed. The board voted to elect Ms. Dunkelberger as Secretary of the Kentucky State Fair Board. The motion passed and Ms. Dunkelberger accepted the position.

PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT, Mr. Mike Berry, Interim President & CEO, Kentucky Venues

Mr. Berry thanked the board for their attendance and for participating in the construction tour. He noted that the KSF is about to enter its 11-day run with the Commissioner's Farm to Fork dinner kicking things off that evening.

Mr. Berry explained that extensive departmental reports have been provided to board members in their meeting packets and rather than having staff read their full reports, each executive staff member will provide a brief overview of key highlights.

Communications – Mr. Ian Cox

- Communications oversees marketing, public relations and graphic design for Kentucky Venues.
- Mr. Cox expresses enthusiasm about the upcoming 11 days and describes the State Fair as an important opportunity to showcase Kentucky.
- Media activity is expected to be substantial:
 - More than 200 interviews are already prescheduled for the fair.
 - More than 50 approved media organizations are participating.
 - Approximately 10–40 reporters have been given access and connections to help tell stories about agriculture, exhibits and activations.
- Mr. Cox acknowledged a QR code included in the meeting materials, which provides access to promotional videos, shareable social-media graphics, Kentucky Venues social-media accounts.
- A major communications emphasis this year is the World's Championship Horse Show:
 - The communications team is increasing social-media attention around the show.
 - Additional photography and videography will be used to promote it.
- Mr. Cox thanked Ms. Dunkelberger and other departments for their work on merchandise and related efforts. He highlights merchandise associated with the fair and horse show, including a limited edition blue-ribbon mug and a highly limited tricolor World's Championship Horse Show item.
- Mr. Cox says he is honored to serve in his role and looks forward to helping make the upcoming 11 days successful.
- Mr. Berry thanked Mr. Cox and reminded board members that they will receive a sheet containing Cox's contact information.
 - Board members are asked to direct media inquiries to the communications team so that the department can assist with interviews and requests.
 - Cox confirms that his phone number is included on the information sheet.
- Mr. Pope asked about the extent of international media coverage for the World's Championship Horse Show. Mr. Cox confirmed that there is media involvement from South Africa and notes that attendance and interest extend beyond Kentucky and the United States. No additional international media presence is known at this time.
- Commissioner Shell provided feedback about the Kentucky Venues website after using it to plan his family's time at the Fair. The website allows users to "favorite" individual events, he suggested making it easier for users to consolidate their favorited events onto one page and

print or download their personalized schedule. Mr. Cox acknowledged the suggestion as useful feedback and noted that improving user-friendliness is an ongoing goal.

Event Services – Mr. Tim Postlethwait

- Mr. Postlethwait explained that Event Services oversees a large portion of Kentucky Venues client and customer-facing staff including:
 - Access Control
 - Event Managers at both properties
 - Venue Services personnel (ushers, ticket takers, concierge, information booth, tram drivers)
 - Ticket Office
 - Downtown parking garages
 - Approximately 370 Venue Services employees and 70 Access Control employees.
 - Employees are primarily event based.
- July was one of the departments busiest months, particularly because of basketball events.
 - Access Control processed more than \$1M in parking revenue over more than 100k transactions.
 - The department implemented open gates/weapon-detection systems for a major basketball event and processed more than 200k people through the system. The successful implementation demonstrated that the technology could efficiently handle very large crowds and potentially be used for clients in the future.
- Event Services received strong customer feedback regarding event execution at both venues.
- Event Managers Ms. Mandy Simpson and Ms. Meghan Dowd were specifically praised for their work.
- The Ticket Office had one event during July, The Basketball Tournament, but have been busy with the World's Championship Horse Show and getting the Championship Rodeo underway.

EXPOSITIONS – Ms. Corinne Fetter

- Expositions oversees the Kentucky State Fair (KSF), World's Championship Horse Show (WCHS), North American International Livestock Exposition, Championship Rodeo, National Farm Machinery Show and Championship Tractor Pull.
- Ms. Fetter expressed excitement for the 122nd Kentucky State Fair and the 123rd World's Championship Horse Show.
- She emphasized that bringing events of this scale together requires extensive collaboration thanking The University of Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Agriculture and other agriculture partners involved with the event.
- Entry numbers are at an all-time high, with 38,799 combined entries for the Kentucky State Fair and World's Championship Horse Show.
 - There are approximately 9,400 exhibitors.
- Combined sponsorships for the KSF and WCHS total approximately \$1.66M.
 - The KSF alone generated approximately \$1.2M in sponsorships, the highest amount ever raised for the fair.
 - Approximately \$466,000 represents WCHS trophy and class sponsorships.
 - The first five-gaited stake will offer a \$200,000 prize, the largest prize in the history of the WCHS.
- Exposition sales include exhibitors in South Wing C and the North Wing:
 - More than 200 exhibitors are located in South Wing C.

- Approximately 30 more are in the North Wing.
- There are 64 concessionaires outside and around the property.
- These activities total slightly more than \$1M in revenue, with additional revenue expected from three or four commission-based vendors in the L Lot associated with the free concert series.
- **Sunshine Class:**
 - The class has reached a record 150 entries; the report lists 148, but she expects the number to continue increasing.
 - The Sunshine Class will take place Wednesday morning at 9:00 a.m.
 - Ms. Fetter strongly encourages board members to attend, describing it as one of the most heartwarming experiences at the Fair.
 - The event coincides with Sensory Awareness Day. Commissioner Shell commented that participation increased significantly this year through a partnership with the Stewart Home in Franklin County. Kentucky Department of Ag previously conducted a cut-flower activity for the Stewart Home and distributed the flowers to its participants where they were invited to participate in the Sunshine Class.
- **United We Stand 250**
 - Recognizing the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence
 - The property has been extensively decorated with American Flags, an effort credited to Mr. Kevin McCoy and the operations team.
 - Special exhibit in South Wing B – Kentucky Venues historian, Stephanie Seber, has invested significant time in developing the exhibit which includes a short video explaining American history and Kentucky’s role in the nations history.
- **Entertainment**
 - Provided by our partners, Triangle Talent
 - 10 nights of free concerts in the L Lot as part of the Texas Roadhouse Concert Series.
 - Additional acts around the grounds, roving the property and on other stages will be located throughout the property. Four new acts have been added this year: Porkchop Review, Agrigolf, Sea Lions act in the A Lot.
- **Thrillway**
 - Operated by our partner, Kissel Entertainment
 - A new ride called Anarchy is making its debut at the Kentucky State Fair. The ride represents an approximately \$1M investment.
- **Animal Health and Compliance**
 - Her team works very closely with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and State Veterinarian’s Office. The goals is to ensure the safety and health of animals and everyone involved with livestock activities.
- **Upcoming events**
 - North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) — November 5–19, with the event entering its 53rd year.
 - National Farm Machinery Show — February 10–13.
 - 2027 Kentucky State Fair — August 19–29
 - The new construction will be open for the 2027 KSF.
 - The team plans to change the livestock schedule for 2027 KSF.
 - An email will be sent to livestock exhibitors explaining the changes.
 - Open beef, sheep and swine shows will occur during the early portion of the fair. The fair will conclude with the junior livestock competitions.

- The Championship Drive, traditionally held on the second Thursday of the fair, will move in 2027 to the final Sunday and take place in Freedom Hall as the grand finale of the fair.
- The new schedule will be communicated directly to exhibitors.

Finance – Mr. Brad Kempf

- Mr. Kempf is serving as Interim Chief Financial Officer and oversees procurement, accounts payable and accounts receivable, general ledger and financials analysis and information technology.
- The Finance Departments responsibilities include:
 - Conducting an annual third-party financial audit
 - Supporting both Kentucky Venues facilities
 - Managing procurement and purchase orders
 - Reviewing and approving vendor invoices
 - Reviewing event-level work orders and assisting Event Services with generating exhibitor and client invoices
 - Managing month-end closing procedures
 - Preparing event-level profit-and-loss reports
 - Consolidating revenue and expenses for board-level financial reporting
- Mr. Kempf explained that the financial packet provided to the board contains four primary reports designed to give members a comprehensive view of the organization's financial position and performance:
 - Consolidated income statement — covers both Kentucky International Convention Center and Kentucky Exposition Center, comparing current results with the prior year and budget for both the current month and year-to-date.
 - Statement of assets — presents current and non-current assets and liabilities.
 - Cash-flow statement — shows how cash moves into and out of the organization.
 - Event-level profit-and-loss reporting — particularly important because Kentucky Venues is an event-driven organization.
 - Event-level P&Ls analyze direct revenues and expenses and compare performance with prior years when appropriate.
 - Individual P&Ls are organized first by facility, beginning with the Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC) and then the Kentucky International Convention Center, followed by direct revenue and expense categories.
 - Mr. Kemp encouraged board members to review the individual P&Ls because they provide a much more detailed picture of financial activity and how performance has changed over time.

Human Resources – Ms. Sierra Rojas

- Ms. Rojas commented that this is her first year preparing for the State Fair in her current position and that she is excited about the experience.
- HR has hired approximately 192 people for the fair. About 50 of those employees have already started working and are assisting with fair setup.
- Kentucky Venues is again providing meal tickets to employees hired for the fair, allowing them to eat during designated fair days.
- HR is also preparing for October open enrollment, when employees will re-enroll in insurance benefits.

- The department is developing a new training curriculum for all staff.

Legal Counsel – Ms. Ellen Benzing

- Ms. Benzing commented that legal counsel for Kentucky Venues focuses primarily in two areas, ethics and insurance.
- Her report in the packed includes a brochure from the Executive Branch Ethics Commission covering ethics provisions applicable to state/federal board members and other board members. Key ethics requirements include:
 - Avoiding self-dealing
 - Restrictions concerning gifts from entities with which the board or its members do business, specifically the \$25 threshold.
 - Properly addressing and disposing of any conflict/formative interest through the required written process.
- Insurance Coverage:
 - Kentucky Venues has directors and officers liability coverage through AIG.
 - The organization also carries substantial commercial general liability coverage.
 - State Risk has historically procured these policies.
- In future reports she will focus on the organizations relatively small number of pending negligence cases. She credited the operations and security teams with maintaining a strong track record in keeping claims under control.
- Mr. Berry raised a question regarding the Statement of Financial Disclosure. Ms. Benzing commented that she would verify the requirement with the Executive Branch Ethics Commission.

Public Safety – Mr. Shawn Hensler

- Mr. Hensler explained that his department has only about 37 employees, yet provides 24/7 coverage across two complexes. Because of the limited staffing level, the department scales staffing up and down depending on event demands. Contracted personnel are heavily used to supplement the department, particularly during the State Fair.
- Mr. Hensler explained the best entry/exit routes and parking to the KSFB members during the Fair.
- Kentucky Venues has worked with the Kentucky Horse Park on a local agreement that allows Horse Park police officers to exercise police powers at the fair. He views the arrangement as an important improvement that will make security operations faster and easier.
- The Safety and Security team is also heavily involved in the final preparations for managing State Fair traffic. The operation involves horse shows, livestock, spectators, employees and contractors, all competing for space and access.
- Looking beyond the fair, the team is planning for the next major undertaking, DWP in September.
- He encouraged board members to review the written Safety and Security report for additional departmental information.

Sales/Food & Beverage – Ms. Laura Whitehead

- Kentucky Venues has two sales teams, one serving the Kentucky Exposition Center (KEC) and the other serving the Kentucky International Convention Center (KICC).
- At KEC, the sales team is concentrating on planning around the facility expansion.

- The goal is to strategically place events in spaces that maximize utilization and revenue. Some longtime clients may need to be moved from spaces they have traditionally occupied to different spaces.
- The team is essentially working through the available spaces as a “jigsaw puzzle” to determine which events fit best where and create opportunities to bring additional groups into the facility.
- At KICC, the sales team continues its strategy of building the customer base in high-value markets, particularly medical, corporate and trade events.
- Staffing changes are underway because of promotions:
 - Ms. Whitehead's move into her current role resulted in the KICC Sales Manager moving into her former director-level sales position.
 - The organization is now seeking a new sales manager for KICC.
- July Sales Overview:
 - KEC booked seven new events, representing approximately \$882,000 in revenue.
 - A major highlight was the renewal of the Equip Expo contract for 2028, with the team working to add two additional years to that agreement.
 - KICC booked eight new events, representing approximately \$595,000 in revenue.
 - A significant booking was the Parents as Teachers Conference, a major citywide event scheduled for 2031.
 - KICC also finalized a short-term booking with NASA for its IT Purchasing conference in October. The NASA event is expected to bring approximately 3,000 attendees and provides a significant October boost for KICC and its hotel partners.
 - During July, the sales teams generated 65 new leads and conducted five site tours between the two venues.
- In July and August, the sales staff are attending three major trade shows to promote the venues, working with Louisville Tourism.
- Food & Beverage:
 - Ms. Whitehead oversees the concession operations at KEC, which is directly operated by Kentucky Venues.
 - The concession team is currently focused on supporting the State Fair and its concession vendors.
 - Catering at KEC is operated by OVG, represented by its general manager Ms. Christina Montanaro and RVP Mr. Jack Blyant.
 - The KICC concessions and catering operation is handled by Levy, represented by its general manager Ms. Lori Kennedy.

Operations – Mr. Kevin McCoy

- Operations has been heavily involved across both properties, supporting events including:
 - Basketball
 - National Street Rods Association
 - The Homeland Security Conference
 - Numerous other events requiring operational support
- The department has also been deeply involved in Phase I and Phase II construction projects and in identifying potential scopes for future P3 projects.
- Mr. McCoy provided a snapshot of what Operations accomplished during approximately the previous 10 days:

- Following the move-out of the National Street Rod Association event, the team quickly transitioned the property for the State Fair.
- More than 1,200 livestock pens were installed.
- The team worked on the West Wing and installed more than 220 loads of dirt.
- Operations coordinated with Housing, building construction personnel, contemporary-structure contractors, state electrical inspectors and the Department of Agriculture for arriving sections.
- The department also coordinated trailer installations and utility locates for both the National Street Rod Association event and the State Fair.
- Additional event-support resources were procured, including:
 - Parking-lot cleaning
 - Janitorial services
 - Temporary fencing
 - Additional lighting
 - Additional equipment for cleanup and event changeovers.

Mr. Berry commented that that concludes the executive team and management reports.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Perry called for any unfinished business to bring before the board. Hearing none he moved to new business.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Perry called on Ms. Laura Whitehead to present the proposed facility rental rates and managements recommendations. Below are the highlights from her report:

- The Sales team reviewed 24 other venues and calculated their rental rates based on a price per square foot basis to establish a competitive market benchmark.
- One chart provides the benchmark information for KEC and KICC.
- Management compared Kentucky Venues' existing price per square foot with the competitive average. Where Kentucky Venues was below the benchmark, adjustments were identified. Where rates were above the benchmark, management considered whether adjustments were necessary, although Ms. Whitehead noted that being above the benchmark was relatively uncommon.
- The benchmark recommendation was initially developed for fiscal year 2026. That recommendation was then incorporated into a longer-term rate schedule extending through 2034. The proposed schedule assumes a 3% annual increase each year.
- Proposed KEC rates were developed to address historically slow rate growth. KEC had previously increased its exhibit hall rates only every other year, causing its pricing to fall behind competing venues. Management therefore recommends a 20% increase in KEC exhibit hall rates. This would bring the average KEC exhibit-hall rate to approximately \$0.08 per square foot.
- Ms. Whitehead commented that this is more consistent with comparable venues once the comparison is narrowed to suburban and agricultural facilities, rather than higher-priced downtown convention centers.
- Management plans to continue increasing rates by approximately 3% annually.

- Meeting room rates were also adjusted, some rates increased and some decreased.
 - The purpose was primarily to eliminate inconsistencies rather than generate a significant revenue increase.
- Freedom Hall rental rates would also increase by 20%.
- The increase is intended both to catch up from historically slow rate growth and to reflect investments made in Freedom Hall during the previous year, including new seats and other upgrades.
- Kentucky agricultural organizations receive a 50% discount on the applicable agricultural rates.
- Move-in and move-out days continue to be charged at 50% of the regular rental rate, since the building is not occupied by guests during those periods.
- There was less need to increase KICC exhibit pricing because its current rates are already generally in line with competitors.
- KICC's ballroom rate will increase, because demand for the ballroom is particularly strong and the space is considered highly competitive.
- KICC meeting-room rates were also adjusted to eliminate inconsistencies and ensure the pricing structure makes sense.
- The proposed rates discussed are daily rates.
- Mr. Pope asked for more information about the venues used for the competitive comparison and where Kentucky Venues falls within the range. Ms. Whitehead explains that the analysis intentionally included both high-end downtown convention facilities and more directly comparable agricultural/suburban facilities. The Baird Center in Milwaukee, a new, upscale downtown convention facility, represented the high end of the comparison.
 - More directly comparable venues included:
 - Indiana State Fairgrounds
 - Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex
 - Wisconsin State Fair Park
 - The goal was to create a balanced comparison between downtown convention centers and agricultural/state-fair facilities.
- The proposed KEC exhibit rate is approximately \$0.08 per square foot, compared with a current rate of approximately \$0.07 per square foot.
- Commissioner Shell confirmed that the rate discussed is approximately \$0.04 per SF, discounted outside of the \$.08 per SF, for agriculture events. That was confirmed.
- Mr. Cleo Battle raised a concern about the proposed structure and suggested considering a dynamic pricing model. He pointed out that approximately 90% of clients, particularly national clients, want to negotiate rates, he compared it to airline and hotel rates based on demand/time of the year, etc.
 - He suggested that the team identify historically slower months and use more aggressive pricing during those periods to generate additional business. Conversely, during high-demand periods, Kentucky Venues should maintain stronger rates rather than automatically discounting.
 - He emphasized that the two Kentucky Venues facilities operate within a broader Louisville hospitality ecosystem that includes:
 - Hotels offering rebates or incentives to groups.
 - The convention/exposition centers offering building discounts.
 - Louisville Tourism offering per-room incentives to attract groups.

- Mr. Battle explained that these entities should coordinate their strategies so that everyone understands when the market should be aggressively pursued and when rates should be protected.
- Ms. Whitehead agreed that the proposed rates are intended as the starting point for negotiations, and that sales teams already negotiate with clients.
- Mr. Battle clarified that he is recommending a more deliberate, built-in flexibility by season or month, rather than leaving every negotiation to individual salespeople.
- He suggested identifying several historically slower months in which the organization would intentionally be more aggressive, while protecting rates during strong months such as September, when Kentucky Venues traditionally does significant business. The proposed approach would be primarily an internal strategy, rather than a rate schedule publicly advertised to customers. Mr. Battle commented that the strategy should be coordinated among the buildings, hotels and Louisville Tourism so that everyone understands the pricing strategy for a particular month.
- He also would like the sales staff to understand when they should maximize rates rather than automatically requesting or granting discounts. Even during a designated discount month, the team could still decide on a case-by-case basis that a particular group does not warrant a discount.
- The board discussed how Kentucky Venues gathers and uses market pricing information. Ms. Whitehead explained that Kentucky Venues does not publicly advertise its rental rates. Instead, management benchmarks competitors through an informal network of convention facilities that share information via surveys. These surveys provide insight into competitors' published or rack rates, but not the actual negotiated rates offered to specific customers.
- Mr. Battle clarified that the idea is not to publicly post different rates by month. Rather, it would involve an internal pricing strategy coordinated among Kentucky Venues, hotels, and Louisville Tourism. The goal is to align sales efforts with market demand by maximizing rates during high-demand periods while allowing more aggressive pricing and flexibility during slower periods to attract business.
- Ms. Whitehead explained that seasonality is only one factor considered when determining how much to discount a client, other factors include additional revenue; food and beverage, breaks or ancillary services, parking.
- Mr. Brent Tolle asked how pricing will work with livestock events in the new facility since there are no airwalls and it is one large building.
 - The building is currently priced as one large facility. Because clients will vary significantly in size, the team will proportionately reduce the rental price based on the client's actual footprint when a client does not need the entire building.
 - Different exhibit halls have different square footage, giving the organization flexibility in determining how space is sold.
 - The building could potentially accommodate three or four separate events simultaneously, depending on how the space is divided.
- Mr. Pope asked how closely Kentucky Venues' actual deals typically come to the proposed standard/rack rates. Ms. Whitehead commented that it is approximately 30% below the published standard starting rate. Events that pay closer to the rack rate include public shows and flea-market type events. These events do not generate significant hotel room nights or other ancillary revenue (F&B, freight, parking, etc.).
- Convention business is more heavily negotiated because of the broader economic impact associated with those events.

- The rack rate therefore functions primarily as a starting point for negotiations, rather than the amount most clients ultimately pay.
- The new rates will not affect proposals that have already been issued. If a client has already received a proposal based on the old rates, that proposal will remain valid.
- Mr. Joe O'Brien returned to the question of how frequently Kentucky Venues actually charges rack rates. Ms. Whitehead acknowledged that very few clients pay the full rack rate because most negotiate. Mr. O'Brien questioned whether the organization should instead use lower advertised rates during slower months to attract business, particularly if clients are going to negotiate regardless. Mr. Battle clarified that Louisville Tourism might promote special offers during slower periods, but the buildings themselves generally do not publicly market their rental rates.

Ms. Sadiqa Reynolds moved, seconded by Mr. John Cox to:

"Approve the proposed facility rental rates as presented." The motion carried.

PARTNER REPORTS

Department of Agriculture – Commissioner Jonathan Shell

- Commissioner Shell reported that the KDA is excited about the upcoming State Fair and the large number of exhibits on display.
- He specifically highlighted the tobacco exhibit, which he encouraged board members to visit if they have any family or personal connection to Kentucky's tobacco heritage. He described the exhibit as a significant effort developed by KDA with Altria. The exhibit includes historical photographs, videos and a tribute to Dr. Bob Pierce. He added that the exhibit is a fitting recognition of an industry that played a major role in building Kentucky, saying he is proud of how the industry is being represented.
- Commissioner Shell recognized the extensive support from KDA during the Fair:
 - Employees contribute approximately 10,700 staff hours which saves the KSFB approximately \$500k in labor expenses.
- The Fair is Commissioner Shell's favorite 11 days of the year and he encouraged board members to be actively involved, especially in the livestock barns.
- KDA has recently held several meetings with the newly established Division of Economic Development. They are working with economic-development funding authorized by the legislature to attract major companies and investments to Kentucky. Potential opportunities include wheat processing, sustainable aviation fuel and tobacco nicotine extraction (which will help the international tobacco industry).
- Commissioner Shell encouraged board members to attend the Commissioner's Dinner that evening where proceeds will go to Kentucky CASA to help foster children across KY experience the KSF and provide opportunities for those kids to participate in other agritourism experiences throughout the year.
- Ms. Reynolds thanked Commissioner Shell for selecting CASA as the beneficiary of the Commissioner's Dinner as that is an organization close to her heart after serving there for 10 years.
- She suggested that KDA include a direct link to the KSF on their website.
- She also asked about the educational scope of the tobacco exhibit. She asked whether the exhibit also addresses the challenges associated with tobacco and why the industry is moving toward areas such as nicotine extraction. Her concern is the large number of children who see

the exhibit and the desire to present a balanced educational perspective for people with different relationships to tobacco.

- Commissioner Shell explained that the exhibit is focused primarily on showing the public how tobacco was planted, grown and produced, rather than addressing the broader challenges surrounding tobacco.
- Ms. Reynolds reiterated that she wanted the question and concern reflected in the record, particularly because of the educational exposure to children.

Kentucky 4-H – Mr. Jeremiah Jury

- Mr. Jury commented that he has attended the Kentucky State Fair every year since he was seven months old and considers the opening/pre-fair day particularly enjoyable because visitors can see everything coming together without the crowds and parking difficulties of the main fair days.
- Recent activity for Kentucky 4-H:
 - The State Communications Day in July had 219 youth participants.
 - More than 1,500 youth participated at county and district levels.
 - Competitions included demonstrations, speeches and mock interviews designed to strengthen communication skills.
- In early August, 4-H participated in a Farm Bureau training day with the FFA state officer team.
- The group also visited Gallrein Farms for Ag Tag photographs with Commissioner Shell and the FFA team.
- 4-H camps have concluded for the summer
- Cloverville:
 - More than 1,100 hams have been entered. Each ham begins with a \$50 cost to the exhibitor. Participants must cure the ham, with smoking optional. Exhibitors bring the finished ham to the State Fair and give a speech about it. Hams are judged both on the speech and the finished product. One of the hams will be auctioned during the fair.
 - Cloverville also contains more than 7,100 projects and exhibits entered by 4-H youth.
 - Mr. Jury encouraged board members to visit Cloverville and see the projects, emphasizing the substantial amount of work and personal growth represented in the exhibits.
- He describes the State Fair as a particularly important place for Kentucky 4-H members to make memories, learn and grow, whether participating in the show ring, exhibiting in Cloverville or simply experiencing the fair.

Kentucky FFA – Mr. Garrett Zimmerman

- FFA state officers completed training in July to prepare for serving Kentucky's membership throughout the coming year. Kentucky FFA has more than 27,000 members, supported by 12 state officers who work with members throughout the year.
- The FFA team arrived Monday and began setting up its booth for the Fair. He praised the small team for accomplishing a large amount of work.
- Exhibits began moving in the previous day, including:
 - Corn
 - Soybeans
 - Hay
 - Agricultural mechanics projects
 - Numerous other student agricultural projects from across Kentucky.

- Mr. Zimmerman emphasized that while an award ribbon may seem small to an outsider, it is very meaningful to the student who earned it.
- He encouraged board members to visit the FFA booth, particularly to see the agricultural mechanics projects on display.

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet – Ms. Donna Schneider

- Donna Schneider, Deputy General Counsel for the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, provides several updates on behalf of the cabinet.
- The Commonwealth's General Fund receipts increased 29% in July, described as one of the highest growth rates in four years.
- Total July revenue reached approximately \$1.4B.
- This represented an increase of more than \$328.7M compared with July 2025.
- The governor announced that 15 nonprofit organizations across Kentucky will receive a combined \$51,175 in grant funding. The grants will support booking dance, music, theater and storytelling performers through the Kentucky Arts Council Performing Arts Directory.
- Investments at Mountain State Resort Park:
 - The park will receive \$6.9 million in hospitality upgrades.
 - The project is intended to improve the visitor experience and attract more travelers.
 - The investment is part of the state's broader historic investment in Kentucky State Parks to support tourism and economic growth.
- Ms. Schneider provided an update on Green River Lake State Park, which suffered significant infrastructure damage from the previous year's historic flooding. The Governor has announced the reopening of 73 primitive campsites. The park is using a phased reopening plan as part of its long-term recovery. Primitive and self-contained camping reopened July 31. Those campsites will remain available through October 31, when the campground closes for the season. Restoration and infrastructure work is scheduled to begin November 1.

OVG – Ms. Christina Montanaro

- She introduced Mr. Jack Lyon, Regional Vice President.
- OVG had a busy summer supporting basketball events through July.
- This will be the first KSF that OVG has operated and is the final major event the company needs to complete as part of getting fully established. They will be providing support for suites during the WCHS, barn parties, the Saddlebred Café and other internal meetings and events.

Levy Restaurants – Lori Kennedy

- Seven events were held at KICC during the previous month.
- She specifically thanked Ms. Whitehead for helping bring approximately 1,500 health inspectors to the building at one time for the NACCHO event, which she described as a successful event.
- During the month:
 - Total food-and-beverage revenues were just over \$1.2M.
 - The commission paid to Kentucky Venues was approximately \$388k.
- The team is preparing for Sam's Club in the coming month and has just completed the Homeland Security event, which she also described as successful.
- She provide fiscal-year-to-date figures, noting that the company's fiscal year runs from October through September:
 - Food-and-beverage sales are currently just over \$7.5M.
 - Year-to-date rent/commission payments are just over \$2M.

- The organization is approximately \$400k above its budget for those payments.
- She also highlights the organization's sanitation and safety record:
- The city conducts two annual health inspections, a third-party company conducts three sanitation audits each year. The most recent third-party inspection occurred at the end of July and Levy received another five-star rating. All three third-party inspections conducted during the year have received five stars.
- Mr. O'Brien asked about the percentage Kentucky Venues receives, Kennedy explains that the payment is technically a commission rather than rent. The commission begins at 25%. Once sales reach a specified threshold, the commission increases to 28%.

Prestige AV – Mr. Jeremy Cox

- Prestige AV has been a partner since the KICC reopening in 2018. Mr. Cox reported that each year since he joined has been a record year, with the company's business increasing approximately 8%–10% annually. He thanked the Kentucky Venues partners and staff for the continued volume of events.
- Prestige AV had another strong fiscal year and supported major events including: Homeland Security, where the company served as the primary AV provider. The upcoming American Legion event, described as a multifaceted, multi-production event.
- Prestige AV is also supporting a similar volume of events involving the Expositions team and the America 250 programming. He expressed pride in his team's ability to work collaboratively with Kentucky Venues to coordinate the many production components required for these events.

ADJOURN

Chairman Perry announced that the published agenda had been completed and reminded the board that the next two meetings are:

- Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at KICC, Boardroom A.
- Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at KEC Executive Boardroom.

Chairman Perry encouraged board members to attend and participate in the Fair and thanked the Kentucky Venues staff for their extensive work in preparing for the event.

Chairman Perry called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Brent Tolle moved, seconded by Mr. Greg Pope, to:
"Adjourn the meeting." The motion carried.

Dated: September 24, 2026



Jessica Dunkelbeger, Secretary



Ray Perry, Chair