

Announcement from the Marias Fair Board - June 18, 2020

Due to COVID-19 concerns, and under the advisement of the Toole County Commissioners, the Board of Directors of the Marias Fair Board has voted to cancel the 2020 Marias Fair, that was to be held in mid-July. A special meeting was held for the sole purpose of making the decision to either wait to the July 1st meeting to make the final decision, or decide to cancel now. After much discussion and deliberation, it was called to a vote. The result, the vote to cancel the fair, was unanimous.

Cancelled Fair Activities include: All evening grandstand events (PRCA Rodeos, Derby, Indian Relay Races, Concerts), Open Class Exhibits, midway & free act entertainment.

In no way, does this affect the 4-H. MSU Extension has made, and will be making, their needed adjustments for safety precautions, for all of the 4-Hers in our 4-County area.

This was not an easy decision, by any means. There were a LOT of hard discussions, and the bottom line is- the people that put forth their time and energy to represent our communities either on the fair board, or in the commission office, or who work in County Extension – EACH one of these people have made the decision to put the health and safety of the people in our communities FIRST.

There are a lot of factors in play.

The main one being – Nobody knows when we will be able to move into Phase 3. Our state has to be in Phase 3, in order for events such as this to be hosted. With the recent rise of COVID-19 cases across the state, it is assumed that we may not be moving into Phase 3 soon.

Cleaning – It would be a requirement that any public bathroom, or high-traveled area, be cleaned top-to-bottom every TWO hours.

Attendance – in order to bring in events such as the Demolition Derby and Indian Relay Races, high attendance would be NEEDED, in order to PAY for the Events. But, if there are restrictions on how many people can be seated in the grandstands, or gathered around the arena, this creates a problem. The other problem – Is that since everything else around us, all across the state, has been cancelled – If we WERE to host our Events – There's a GOOD likelihood that EVERYBODY would come!! Which, in ANY other year – would be fantastic! BUT, this would be a HUGE problem, having so many people converge onto Shelby MT, during this pandemic.

Safety of our people. This is what it keeps coming back to. The people who hold the seats on the board and commissioner office, are extremely concerned. They do NOT want to see someone killed by the virus, all because of our Fair.

And, then again, it comes back around to – The inevitable. It's not "our" decision in the first place. The State of Montana, led by our Governor – makes the rules. If the regulations and restrictions are in place, and not going to be lifted by July 15 – There isn't anything more that can be done.

There IS a silver lining in all of this though. The budget money that would have been put into the fair – This money is now going to be used to IMPROVE THE FAIRGROUNDS. This could be very beneficial and something that our whole community will have the opportunity to enjoy in future years. The Marias Fair WILL BE BACK. And – BETTER THAN EVER!

These are tough times. We WILL make it through. There are good times yet to be had at the Marias Fair in coming years. Thanks everybody.