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Eastern Idaho State Fair Continues To Clear Air

BLACKFOOT, ID (August 22, 2011) – The air at the Eastern Idaho State Fair will continue to be a little clearer this September after Board officials have decided to carry on with last year's smoking policy.

Keeping continuity with last year's fair, the majority of the 2011 Eastern Idaho State Fair will be smoke-free, with the exception of two designated smoking areas. Smoking will only be permitted in the pari-mutuel betting areas and inside the beer gardens. Smoking has always been prohibited in the grandstands, tents, commercial buildings, and livestock barns and shelters, said the Fair's general manager, Brandon Bird.

"Attending the fair is a fun family experience for people of all ages," said Bird. "Limiting exposure to secondhand smoke makes a more enjoyable atmosphere for everyone."

To alert Fairgoers, Bird said that smoke-free fair signs will be posted at all of the Fair entrances and exits. Signs designating smoking areas will also be clearly posted throughout the grounds area.

Reflecting on last year's success, the Southeastern District Health Department and the Eastern Idaho State Fair Manager, Brandon Bird, view the continuation of the smoke-free policy change as a progressive step forward in the area of tobacco prevention and cessation. Of the 724 respondents who were surveyed at the 2010 fair, 87% reported that they enjoyed the fair being smoke-free; 8% stated that they didn't enjoy the smoke-free experience; and 5% said they didn't care. Fair-goers adamantly expressed their overwhelming support for the smoke-free fair policy environment, resulting in only a fraction of compliance issues.

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Multiple advantages occur by implementing a smoke-free policy such as: 1) it creates a healthier environment for Fair attendees, 2) it eliminates cigarette butts being scattered around the fairgrounds, 3) it reduces safety hazards, and 4) it lessens liability issues.

Health advocates are extremely pleased with the Eastern Idaho's smoke-free policy. "Because of the obvious health effects related to secondhand smoke, it is a growing national trend to see an increase in the number of smoke-free outdoor venues," said Traci Lambson, Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Coordinator for the Southeastern District Health Department. "For many people, going to the Fair is a family tradition. It is a great example for children to partake in a fun-filled environment, not having to dodge secondhand smoke while waiting in lines for carnival rides and food. Prohibiting tobacco use can have a positive effect on lifestyle choices for our youth, and I believe that the Eastern Idaho State Fair is paving the way by setting an example for other fairs throughout Idaho."

The 2011 Eastern Idaho State Fair returns to Blackfoot on Saturday, September 3rd through Saturday, September 10th. Complete schedules and 2011 Fair information can be found at www.funatthefair.com or by calling (208) 785-2480.

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*An annual tradition for 109 years, the Eastern Idaho State Fair is a favorite destination to over 200,000 visitors, creating fond memories and unforgettable experiences to all ages. This year's theme, **It's Udderly Fantastic**, is a celebration of Idaho's agricultural heritage – a vital part of the Fair throughout its history. From entertainment to agricultural heritage, every aspect of the Eastern Idaho State Fair is udderly fantastic!*