



# Long-Range Business Plan for the Mesa County Fairgrounds

Volume I – Business Plan Summary

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Submitted by:



**MARKIN CONSULTING ■ MAPLE GROVE, MINNESOTA**

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This section contains the recommended long-range business plan for the Mesa County Fairgrounds (the MCFG). Volume II of this report contains narratives, analyses, observations, recommendations and exhibits that support the recommended long-range plan. This plan should be read and assessed in conjunction with Volume II.

## **BACKGROUND**

In December 2007, Markin Consulting began its work in assisting Mesa County develop a long-range plan for the operations and facilities of the Fairgrounds. The specific objectives of our assistance were:

- Develop and recommend a mission statement and philosophy of the MCFG
- Identify goals and objectives for the operations of the MCFG
- Identify alternative strategies to accomplish the goals and objectives
- Assess the market, financial, operational and physical plant implications of the strategies
- Recommend financial, operational, organizational, and facility strategies and implementation plan

During the course of the engagement, we conducted interviews of representatives of the Mesa County Commission and Administration, Mesa County Facilities and Parks, Fairgrounds' management and staff, users of the Fairgrounds and public and private organizations. Two meetings were held to solicit input from the public as well.

## **NEXT STEPS**

This report is a first step in the long-range planning process for the MCFG. The findings and recommendations contained in this report should be studied, discussed, and acted upon by the Mesa County Facilities and Parks Department and management of the MCFG in a manner benefiting the future of its operations.

## OVERVIEW

The mission statement of any organization documents that business' general purpose, as well as the function it will perform. It is designed to communicate that purpose to those directly and indirectly involved with the business. The mission statement establishes the framework for all decisions regarding the business.

Most important, the mission statement provides direction for several groups of interested people. It forms the foundation for strategic planning by upper level management. It guides management and staff in making day-to-day operating decisions. It helps suppliers (concessionaires, users, carnival operator, exhibitors, etc.) understand the philosophy of the organization's management, in order to become better provider of goods and services.

In 2000, the Mesa County Commission adopted the following mission statement for the Fairgrounds:

***The mission of the Mesa County Fairgrounds is to provide citizens of Mesa County with a multi-use event facility which serves the agricultural, business, cultural, educational, recreational, and urban and youth interests of Mesa County.***

On the basis of our review of the operations of the Mesa County Fairgrounds, its place in the region, and its opportunities for growth and expansion, the following amended mission statement and new values statement are recommended:

## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE MESA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

The mission of the Mesa County Fairgrounds, as a multi-purpose event facility, is to enrich the area's quality of life by providing educational, entertainment, recreational, agricultural, commercial and social activities for the benefit of the residents and businesses of Mesa County.

## VALUES STATEMENT OF THE MESA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Integral to our mission, the Mesa County Fairgrounds is committed to:

- Providing a first-class venue for community celebrations and events
- Showcasing and promoting the area's agriculture, commerce, technology and culture
- Providing for youth and family-affordable activities
- Supporting the visitor and tourism industry
- Offering a safe, clean and accessible environment for everyone
- Providing outstanding customer service
- Operating in a fiscally-responsible manner

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The long-range goals and objectives of the MCFG focus on essential aspects of its operation, organization, facilities, and policies in fulfilling its mission. These goals and objectives were developed after extensive research and analyses of various factors and issues that affect the operations of the Fairgrounds. The research and analysis included:

- Interviews with the management and staff, business and community leaders, Mesa County Commissioner and Administration, Mesa County Facilities and Parks, users of Fairground facilities, area residents and other parties
- Research and assessment of relevant documents and records affecting the organization and operations of the Fairgrounds
- Analyses of various trends and factors affecting the Fairgrounds operations, including:
  - Community needs and goals
  - Location factors
  - Changing demographics of the market area
  - Competition for event facilities and entertainment in the market area
  - Economic trends and factors
  - Market opportunities for interim events
- Analysis of operational and financial results of the Fairgrounds

On the basis of the research and analyses, goals and objectives were developed for the Fairgrounds as follows:

### ***GOAL 1 – IMPROVE THE PUBLIC’S AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF THE FAIRGROUNDS***

A number of factors affect the public’s awareness and perception of the Fairgrounds as a vital community-gathering place for year-round events and activities. These factors include location in proximity to the population center, increased competition from other event facilities in the area, region and state, lack of adequate signage and marketing for events held at the Fairgrounds, and the general conditions of some of the fairground facilities.

### ***GOAL 2 – INCREASE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF INTERIM EVENTS***

Though the Fairgrounds are extensively used for 4-H activities, CO State University Extension programs, equine events and activities, receptions and local meetings, the MCFG has the potential to become a regional, multi-use event facility by (1) upgrading and expanding facilities, (2) actively marketing the facilities, and (3) identifying and replacing financially-marginal events .

***GOAL 3 – EXPAND PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS***

Management and staff have developed very good relations with the County and key users and sponsors of the Fair and Fairgrounds, but need to improve the Fairgrounds visibility, prove its vital contribution as a community asset and provide for possible joint marketing of the Fairground facilities. Relations could be improved with the City of Grand Junction, Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, Grand Junction Visitors and Convention Bureau and further developed with local business, civic and service organizations.

The following strategies are recommended to achieve the goals and objectives listed in the previous section.

### **Strategies to Improve Public's Awareness and Perception of Fairgrounds**

Strategy/Action Plan	Implementation Date
1. Upgrade signage at major access points to the Fairgrounds.	2007 - 2008
2. Increase local promotion of events, activities and facilities at the Fairgrounds through:	
▪ Developing and implementing a customer service program to assist in promotion of interim events	2007
▪ Work with Grand Junction Chamber, Visitors and Convention Bureau and other community organizations to assist in cross promotion of events and activities	2007
▪ Enhanced web site that includes current stories, photos and announcements about events, activities and facilities	2007

### **Strategies to Increase the Quality and Quantity of Non-Fair Events**

Strategy/Action Plan	Implementation Date
1. Develop a detailed marketing strategy and plan for the Fairground facilities including target markets and approaches identified and detailed in Volume II of this report, contact methods, materials, goals and time frames.	2007 - 2008
2. Develop a plan and approach to implementing the facility recommendations presented in Volume II of this report.	2007 - 2008
3. Adjust pricing of facilities as detailed in Volume II of this report.	2008

### **Strategies to Improve Partnership Relations**

Strategy/Action Plan	Implementation Date
1. As the Fair Board positions become vacant, encourage the County Commissioners to appoint new members who have broader and varied community contacts and influences.	On-Going
2. Have management become active in a variety of local business, civic and service organizations; providing multiple forums to educate and develop relationships.	On-Going