

1993:

- Creation of the Blue Ribbon Foundation!
- Sixth consecutive Fair attendance record was set – 893,000 people
- Garth Brooks sold out his Grandstand performance in 19 minutes

1994:

- The Blue Ribbon Foundation's efforts were beginning to pay off in visible facility improvements, including the rebuilding of Grandfather's Barn, external repairs to the Administration Building and rehabilitation of the Agriculture Building
- Grandstand sell-outs included Reba McEntire and George Strait
- Previous attendance records shattered for the seventh consecutive year with a total of more than 913,000 attendees

1995:

- Fair theme: "The Fun and Only"
- The Agriculture Building (originally constructed in 1904) was renovated with updates including a new roof, all new windows and doors, and brick and mortar work. Now home to the famous butter cow.
- The Fair ventured into the internet scene with a temporary website

1996:

- Fair theme: "Let Yourself Go"
- More than \$9 million worth of improvements were made to the Grandstand, Ye Old Mill and Riley Stage. The Pella Plaza, featuring flags from all 99 Iowa counties, was added as well
- The Fair's widely popular website, iowastatefair.org, became a permanent fixture on the world wide web

1997:

- The Administration Building received a much-needed interior overhaul worth \$1.8 million and murals were added to Ye Old Mill in response to Fairgoer's requests
- The nearly two and a half tons of seats removed from the Grandstand during renovation were recycled into black lawn edging

-Fair Attendance was at an all-time high of 946,239 people with Grandstand attractions including ZZ Top, The Wallflowers, and Little Richard

1998:

-Hy-Vee Fun Forest, a permanent park for exploration, play and entertainment, was being completed in time for the next year's Fair

-Kenny and Bobbi McCaughey, parents of the famous septuplets, led the State Fair Parade (Fun fact: my mom worked at Iowa Methodist when they were born and she and her team managed the world-wide communications!)

1999:

-Renovations to the Cattle Barn included a new roof, replacement of all gutters and downspouts and a new concrete floor in the foyer area. Additionally, both the north and south ends of the west side were extended 35 feet to the sidewalk

-Martha Stewart spent a day at the Fair taping an episode for her television show

2000:

-Celebration of the new millennium, Fairgoers were encouraged to "Zero in 10-20, 2000" on a variety of high-tech related exhibits

-Credit cards were accepted at the gates for the first time

-The U.S. Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon performed

2001:

-Restorations were completed on the William C. Knapp Varied Industries Building, originally built in 1911. Improvements included repainting, replacing windows and the roof, updating restrooms and adding heat and air for year-round use

2002:

-First phase of renovations to the Horse Barn included the replacement of the roof and the main east entrance had a facelift including brick repair and the replacement of the second story window

-For the first time Fair attendance topped one million!

2003:

-The Livestock pavilion, originally constructed in 1902, received repairs to the enormous three-tiered roof along with the inside now being climate-controlled

-A new \$1 million Skyglider, stretching 1440 feet, was installed

2004:

-Record 1,053,978 visitors to the Iowa State Fair to celebrate its sesquicentennial (115th anniversary)

-*USA Weekend Magazine* ranked the Fair as the #2 summer fun spot in the U.S.

-National media visits included CBS News Sunday Morning, USA Today and Monster Nation, which produces television shows for the Discovery Channel. Also, ESPN ranked the Fair's debut Outhouse Race among its Top 10 Plays of the Day

-On-grounds ATM withdrawals totaled nearly \$2 million, first time ever more than 5,000 kegs of beer were sold, 10.2 million hits on iowastatefair.org over the 11-day run, and Super Bull broke 1995 record coming in at a weight 3,378 pounds!

2005:

-The Ronald and Margaret Kenyon Gallery debuted at the Fair with exciting and innovative displays including a livestock judging contest, a thrilling train crash and revolving carousel sporting the evolution of Fair fashions

-Grandstand line-up featured Keith Urban and Brad Paisley

2006:

-Debut of the Susan Knapp Amphitheater located in Heritage Village. Made possible by a \$750,000 contribution from William C. Knapp and named in honor of his wife

-Fair theme: "Only at the Fair"

-Estimated 112,295 people on Extreme Sunday—a record for the Fair's last day

-One of the largest free entertainment crowds with more than 10,000 attendees for the performance by Disney star Raven

2007:

-The Animal Learning Center, an ag-education facility, opened with exhibits showing Fairgoers about the animal birthing process. Ten calves were born in it during the Fair

-New horseshoe courts were constructed to the east of Pioneer Hall

-A wind turbine for renewable energy generation debuted on Expo Hill (its right by our Blue Ribbon Foundation office!)

2008:

-Construction continued on the Richard O. Jacobson Exhibition Center, a new, world-class facility featuring an indoor arena, practice arena and seating for 3,500 Fairgoers scheduled for completion in time for the 2010 Fair

-More than 11,000 Fairgoers packed into the Grandstand in the early hours of opening day to set a world record for the most people simultaneously eating a corndog (not hard to believe this contributed to the largest opening day attendance on record!)

-An Olympic Pavilion set up near Rock Island Avenue offered continuous televised coverage of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, and Fairgoers watched as Des Moines native and butter-sculpture subject Shawn Johnson took home gymnastics gold

2009:

-The Elwell Family Food Center renovation was complete, transforming the existing Tourism Building into a more spacious environment for all competitive food judging and displays. Also Grandfather's Barn was re-opened with the Wine Experience exhibit

-Fairgoers brought canned goods for free admission opening day helping the Fair collect 74,375 pounds of food for the Food Bank of Iowa

2010:

-The Blue Ribbon Foundation successfully introduced its own concession treat! The Fair Square, a marshmallow and crisped rice cereal treat on-a-stick, was frequently sold-out, and all its proceeds benefited the Foundation's efforts to restore the Fairgrounds (the other interns and I are anxious to hear what this year's Fair Square flavor is going to be!)

2011:

-Phase one of the "green" renovation of Expo Hill started. It included a solar panel system (array) placed on the MidAmerican Energy building as well as new landscaping to help create a path with plaza areas extending up the hillside, providing a new entry point to Expo Hill

-100 years of the butter cow

-Sold out Grandstand shows including Train/Maroon 5, Def Leppard/Heart, and REBA/Jerrod Niemann

-Successful debut of the Fair's print at home tickets

2012:

-Phase two of Expo Hill completed in time for the Fair. Included a stage area and additional features such as LED lamp posts, solar powered cooling benches, solar pavers and bollards that light the new concrete paths and stairways

2013:

-Renovations to the Patty & Jim Cownie Cultural Center included the addition of storage space, offices, family restrooms and more exhibit space

-More than 1,500 Fairgoers volunteered in the first ever Opening Day Meal Packaging event which produced over 255,000 meals. An additional Food Drive discount day resulted in another 45,438 pounds of donated food

2014:

-More renovations to the Patty & Jim Cownie Cultural Center consisted of a conversion of the third floor from a dormitory space to an exhibit area allowing the Fair to offer expanded programming within the Cultural Center to reach a larger audience and explore more aspects of our culture

-First phase of renovations was completed to the Youth Inn, providing air conditioning, new show and restroom facilities along with new bunks and mattresses in the upper level

2015:

-The new MidAmerican Energy Stage opened, including fixed seating on a concrete surface with designated ADA seating area, as well as dressing rooms and a loading dock. This stage hosts a full line-up of free entertainment each year and KCCI 8 News broadcasts First News at 5 live from the stage during the Fair

-Second phase of Youth Inn was complete, adding elevators and air conditioning to the first floor

-Record-breaking attendance of 1,117,398 people

2016:

-Third and final phase of Oman Family Youth Inn was completed. The windows were replaced and there were improvements to the main floor and stage area, in addition to an enhanced kitchen facility. New landscaping and parking lot complete the north side of the building

-Second phase of Ruan Plaza paved the gravel parking area, added trees and a dedicated sidewalk for better pedestrian flow