

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Month, Date, Year

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## 2021 NHSFR Drew \$18 Million Statewide Economic Impact for Nebraska

**Lincoln, NE**— The Lancaster Event Center (LEC) Fairgrounds announced today that the recent NHSFR Lincoln rodeo drew \$18 million in out-of-state visitor spending this past July to Lincoln and the state of Nebraska, according to a newly completed economic impact study.

“Like the College World Series and Omaha Zoo, we found the NHSFR Lincoln at the Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds to be one of Nebraska’s leading events that attract a large share of participants and visitors from outside of the State of Nebraska, leading to a significant impact on the state and local economy,” said Dr. Eric Thompson, K.H. Nelson Professor of Economics and Director of Bureau of Business Research at University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

“Visitors traveling long distances often stay for an extended period, accumulating hundreds or even thousands of dollars of spending while in the state,” said Dr. Eric Thompson.

A report prepared by Dr. Eric Thompson has been released which provides an estimate of the NHSFR’s economic impact in both Lancaster County and the State of Nebraska.

High school rodeo participant families and rodeo/trade show audience spending is central to the economic impact indicating the NHSFR drew 19,233 visitors generating 97,347 visitor-days as visitors stayed from 3-8 days each.

The statewide economic impact of the NHSFR was \$18 Million including \$6.04 Million in labor income which is equivalent to creating 174 new full-year jobs. The event generated \$1.49 Million in state and local tax revenues.

The 1,623 high school rodeo participant travel parties reported an average spending of \$3,329 per family during their visit to Lancaster County before, during and after the NHSFR. Another notable highlight was all NHSFR Lincoln families, vendors, staff and trade show shoppers – at the highest attended NHSFR in its history – reported spend over \$2.8 million on lodging in Lancaster County.

“While the fairgrounds broke even operationally this first year in 2021 after a canceled year in 2020 due to the pandemic health concerns, our hard-working team and Ag Society Board invested our passion and expertise in ag tourism to bring this event for the impact on our community – economically from outside-of-state visitors and to attract new citizens, students and investors to

Lincoln and Nebraska,” said Amy Dickerson, managing director of LEC Fairgrounds, “This impact will continue to grow when the rodeo returns in 2026 and 2027.”

LEC Fairgrounds is already working with the community and the rodeo association on plans for the NHSFR to return in 2026 and 2027.

But the impact won’t stop with the NHSFR. With the newly expanded outdoor Grandstand Arena and National Event Center Campground, LEC Fairgrounds is getting requests from a variety of national and international events, which means even greater impact is on the way for the State of Nebraska and for the local community.

The Family Motor Coach Association will be the next new event to use what is now the USA’s 10<sup>th</sup> largest event center campground with over 2,000 RVs expected the end of this August for their International Convention and RV Rally.

“Anything that improves the LEC Fairgrounds benefits our local youth and citizens that get to use these improvements. With more large events attracted to our facility, this new revenue will help us better maintain the grounds for local uses – including the annual Super Fair that is core to our mission.” said Kendra Ronnau, president of Lancaster County Ag Society which manages the LEC Fairgrounds, “You’ll see new events announced in the new covered Grandstand at this year’s Super Fair as well.”

The County Board provided the investment of \$7 million in lodging tax visitor revenues to invest in the LEC Fairgrounds to attract more visitors to the county.

“It’s proving to be a smart investment with over \$60M in outside-of-county visitor spend coming from the first four new events already contracted to visit Lincoln from 2021 to 2027--and more to come!” said Rick Vest, County Commissioner, who until recently had the fairgrounds in his district.

The full economic impact report by Dr. Thompson with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research is available for public viewing at [LancasterEventCenter.org/NHSFR-Impact](https://LancasterEventCenter.org/NHSFR-Impact).

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#### **ABOUT LANCASTER EVENT CENTER FAIRGROUNDS**

*The Lancaster Event Center (LEC) Fairgrounds located on the east side of Lincoln, Nebraska is known as the Midwest’s premier multi-use facility & home of the Lancaster County Super Fair with over 320 other events annually, contributing over \$60M in economic impact to the area. Key features of LEC Fairgrounds include 400,000 square feet across five inter-connected buildings, full catering and food/beverage service, multiple advertising/naming sponsorship opportunities, 320-site year-round campground with water/electric hookups (additional 964 large event campsites), a new 3,300-person covered grandstand with 400x600’ outdoor multi-use arena, ample outdoor livestock pens & horse stalls all set on 160-acre grassy fairgrounds with ample, convenient parking adjacent to natural and retail amenities. LEC Fairgrounds is located minutes from I-80 Waverly exit while being just 15 minutes from downtown Lincoln attractions. Opened in 2001 by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, LEC Fairgrounds operates as a public, independent county-level political subdivision and 501(c)(3) non-profit. The Agricultural Society is celebrating 20 years and counting in its mission under Nebraska State Law to be a key contributor to Lancaster County’s youth, culture and economy by providing a professional, friendly and fun experience at the LEC Fairgrounds while striving to engage the community in the unique agricultural heritage of Lancaster County for years to come. For additional information, visit [LancasterEventCenter.org](https://LancasterEventCenter.org) or contact the media contacts above.*