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Michael Searle becomes Chief Operating Officer at OC Fair & Event Center

COSTA MESA (March 25, 2026) – Michael Searle has been chosen as OC Fair & Event Center's new Chief Operating Officer to lead fair production, security, event operations, facility operations, planning & production and food & beverage departments. Searle started in his new role this month.

Searle brings more than three decades of leadership experience in the fair and event industry, with expertise in operations, strategic planning and infrastructure development. Throughout his career, he has focused on building strong, collaborative teams and fostering a culture of accountability, innovation and shared purpose.



Most recently, he served as Deputy Director of the Arizona State Fair, where he helped lead significant operational and financial advancements. During his tenure, he oversaw major capital improvements, implemented site redesign initiatives that enhanced guest flow and expanded family seating, launched the popular Backyard concert venue and introduced innovative concepts to expand year-round facility usage. He also strengthened financial reserves while securing increased state appropriations to support long-term sustainability.

Searle entered the fair industry in 1988 with Snuffy's Magical Clown Review, developing firsthand expertise in event production and guest engagement that would underpin his leadership in large-scale operations. In 2000, he co-founded Fair Executives Company, providing management and production services to fairs throughout the western United States and supporting strategic growth across multiple events.

A respected industry leader, Searle has served in executive and board roles with the Arizona Fairs Association and Western Fairs Association, and on committees within the International Association of Fairs and Expositions. He

was inducted into the Arizona Fairs Association Hall of Fame and has been recognized as Fair Manager of the Year for his contributions to advancing the fair industry. Searle was appointed to serve on the Arizona Tourism Council in an effort to share his talents and knowledge with the state.

His leadership combines operational discipline with forward-thinking strategy, grounded in the belief that strong community involvement is essential to the long-term vitality of public event venues, strengthening organizations while preserving the agricultural and community traditions at the heart of the fair experience.

OC Fair & Event Center in Costa Mesa, California, is home to the annual OC Fair. Year-round attractions include Centennial Farm, Heroes Hall and Pacific Amphitheatre.

OC Fair & Event Center also hosts year-round events and festivals. For more information, visit ocfair.com.

Support of OC Fair & Event Center provides year-round educational opportunities and helps fund community give-back programs.



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