FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 8th, 2026

Contact: Lori Lancaster
Phone: (509) 222-3749
Email: lori@bentonfranklinfair.com

BENTON FRANKLIN FAIR & RODEO CELEBRATES 78TH YEAR OF COMMUNITY TRADITION

KENNEWICK, Wash. – The 2026 Benton Franklin Fair & Rodeo celebrated a landmark year as community support generated a record $1,734,427 for local youth through the Market Stock Sale.

The record-setting sale was a defining achievement of the 78th annual Fair, held August 25-29. Over five days, the nonprofit event welcomed 120,398 fairgoers to celebrate agriculture, youth achievement, entertainment and the community traditions behind the Best Week of Summer.

“The Market Stock Sale represents the heart of our mission. It gives local youth the opportunity to develop responsibility, confidence and leadership through agriculture,” said Lori Lancaster, Executive Director. “This record belongs to the young exhibitors who spent months raising and preparing their animals, and to the community members and buyers who showed up to support them.”

A NEW VIEW OF FAIR TRADITIONS

The 2026 season marked the debut of new grandstands at the Benton County Fairgrounds, enhancing the experience for two longtime community traditions: the Horse Heaven Round-Up and Demolition Derby. Fans filled the grandstands for five nights of PRCA rodeo action, while the Demolition Derby drew a sold-out crowd on August 22.

The Horse Heaven Round-Up Rodeo, Hayden Homes Summer Concert Series, carnival, competitive exhibits, livestock shows and free entertainment offered something for every generation. The Fair also directly created 177 jobs and relied on the work of hundreds of volunteers, exhibitors, vendors, sponsors and community partners.

The Fair’s reach extended well beyond the Tri-Cities. Ticket buyers from 37 states attended the 2026 Fair, while the Horse Heaven Round-Up broadcast had the potential to reach 42 million households through a live broadcast on The Cowboy Channel.

IMPACT BEYOND THE EVENT

The Fair's impact extended beyond five days of entertainment. A recent economic impact study by Johnston Consulting estimates the Benton Franklin Fair generates $30.5 million in local economic impact.

Community partnerships also helped make the Fair more accessible. A total of 36,796 free rides were provided to and from the Fair through Ben Franklin Transit, with service sponsored by Central Plateau Cleanup Company.

Through its My First Rodeo Initiative, the Fair invited 1,000 clients and families of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Benton and Franklin Counties to experience the rodeo and Fair, providing admission tickets at no cost.

On STCU Educator Appreciation Day, 873 school employees and home educators received free Fair admission in recognition of their service to local students.

The Fair Association also awarded $10,000 in scholarships to local students and $2,250 through the Youth Livestock Exhibitor Video Contest, which showcased livestock projects and educational content.

Fairgoers helped generate an additional $2,544 donation to Second Harvest through Opening Day admission sales.

"These numbers demonstrate that the Fair's impact isn't limited to attendance," said Lancaster. "Every ticket purchased, animal supported, bus ride provided and volunteer hour contributed helps us create opportunities for youth and serve our community."

2026 FAIR BY THE NUMBERS

- $30.5 million estimated local economic impact
- $1,734,427 generated for local youth through the record-setting Market Stock Sale
- 120,398 fairgoers over five days
- 37 states represented by Fair ticket buyers
- 42 million households with potential access to the Horse Heaven Round-Up broadcast
- 36,796 free Ben Franklin Transit rides
- 1,000 Boys & Girls Clubs clients and families invited to My First Rodeo
- 873 school employees and home educators admitted free
- $10,000 awarded in scholarships
- $2,544 donated to Second Harvest
- $2,250 awarded through the Youth Livestock Exhibitor Video Contest
- 177 jobs created
- The Fair parade drew 3,000 spectators and 2,375 participants to downtown Kennewick.

These results were made possible by the commitment of local youth, families, volunteers, buyers, sponsors, vendors, nonprofit organizations, first responders and fairgoers.

Planning is underway for the 79th Benton Franklin Fair & Rodeo August 24-28, 2027.

ABOUT THE BENTON FRANKLIN FAIR ASSOCIATION

The Benton Franklin Fair Association is an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to developing young leaders, promoting agriculture and bringing the community together. The Fair Association is supported by year-round employees, a 13-member Board of Directors, and hundreds of volunteers, sponsors, and community partners.

For more information, visit bentonfranklinfair.com.

BENTON FRANKLIN FAIR & RODEO
www.bentonfranklinfair.com

812 W. Washington St
Pasco WA 99301

Phone: (509)222-3749
E-mail: lori@bentonfranklinfair.com