

Live copy of <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/minnesota-state-fair-canceled-2020-coronavirus-covid19/> retrieved 2026-09-28 (HTTP 200) for the StenTam ERC Practice Defense Orders Library; scripts, stylesheets and images removed for conversion

- Latest
 - U.S.
 - Iran War
 - MTV VMAs
 - World
 - Politics
 - Entertainment
 - HealthWatch
 - MoneyWatch
 - Crime
 - Space
 - Sports
 - Brand Studio
 - The Free Press
- Local News
 - Atlanta
 - Baltimore
 - Bay Area
 - Boston
 - Chicago
 - Colorado
 - Detroit
 - Los Angeles
 - Miami
 - Minnesota
 - New York
 - Philadelphia
 - Pittsburgh
 - Sacramento
 - Texas
- Live
 - CBS News 24/7
 - Baltimore
 - Bay Area
 - Boston
 - Chicago
 - Colorado
 - Detroit
 - Los Angeles
 - Miami
 - Minnesota
 - New York
 - Philadelphia
 - Pittsburgh

- Sacramento
 - Texas
 - 48 Hours
 - 60 Minutes
- Shows
 - 48 Hours
 - 60 Minutes
 - CBS Evening News
 - CBS Mornings
 - CBS Morning News
 - CBS Reports
 - CBS Saturday Morning
 - The Daily Report
 - The Dish
 - Face the Nation
 - Sunday Morning
 - The Takeout
 - Things That Matter
 - The Uplift
 -
 - CBS News Investigates
 - CBS News Confirmed
 - Podcasts
 - Newsletters
 - Download Our App
 - CBS News Team
 - Executive Team
 - Brand Studio
 - Paramount+
 - Join Our Talent Community
 - RSS Feeds

•

- Minnesota
- |
- News
- Weather
- Sports
- Video
- WCCO Shows & Specials

•

- All News
- Twin Cities News
- Greater Minnesota News
- Wisconsin News
- WCCO Investigates
- Community Journalism
- Politics

- Immigration
 - Crime
 - Health
 - Your Money
 - Good Question
 - Finding Minnesota
-
- NEXT Weather
 - Live Radar
 - Closings & Delays
 - Weather Watcher Network
-
- Latest Sports
 - CBS Sports HQ
 - Vikings
 - Twins
 - Timberwolves
 - Lynx
 - Wild
 - United FC
 - Aurora FC
 - Gophers
 - High School Sports Rally
-
- State Fair
 - Good Question
 - Finding Minnesota
 - WCCO Investigates
 - Mental Health Matters
 - Talking Points
 - On the Edge
 - Vietnam 50 Years Later
 - Footprint to Murder
 - Home for the Holidays
 - Savor Asia
-
- Station Info
 - WCCO-TV News Team
 - Links & Numbers
 - Contests & Promotions
 - Galleries
 - WCCO-TV Jobs
 - Download WCCO's App
 - Advertise
 - Memorials

Watch CBS News

Local News

'It's The Only Decision': Minnesota State Fair Canceled For 2020 Due To COVID-19 Pandemic

May 22, 2020 / 3:35 PM CDT / CBS Minnesota

Add CBS News on Google

Coronavirus: Latest News | Community Resources | COVID-19 Info | Download Our App | CBSN Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) -- For months, ever since the arrival of the first COVID-19 case in Minnesota, the state has speculated whether or not 2020 would see a Minnesota State Fair. Now, the board of managers has made it official.

The Minnesota State Fair has, for the first time in three-quarters of a century, been canceled. The next time the State Fair is scheduled to receive excited fairgoers will not be until, at the earliest, August 26, 2021.

"The State Fair needs to be a full-on celebration. That's what makes it very special for so many of us. ... That's exactly why we can't have a fair this year. We owe it to you now, and we owe it to posterity to give you the very best that we possibly can in a safe environment. By taking the tough road today, we guarantee that the fair's future remains hopeful and bright," State Fair general manager Jerry Hammer said. "We've been working hard and doing our very best with preparations for the 2020 State Fair. The picture was cloudy in March, but things have cleared up considerably since then. Right now is the time of year when things need to really take off if we're going to have a fair, but we can see that we're out of runway and can't get off the ground. There will be no State Fair this year."

The last time that happened was back in 1946, due to the polio pandemic. And it was reportedly canceled only four times before that -- in 1945 due to travel restrictions during World War II, in 1893 because it was up against the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and in both 1861 and 1862 because of the Civil War and the U.S.-Dakota War.

It's without question the largest single gathering in the state, and in fact is among the most well-attended state fairs nationwide, with annual attendance tallies lately surpassing 2 million.

Fair officials said that your 2020 admission ticket and concert tickets will be valid for 2021, and no action is necessary. All Grandstand shows have been postponed to 2021, and you will keep the same seat location. However, if you want a refund, the fair's website can guide you through that process.

The cancellation is a blow both financially and emotionally for many of the hundreds of fair vendors. Dan Wozniak's family has operated two French fry booths for the past 47 years. He says a scaled back fair would not work.

"I think instead of trying to run it on a partial basis, you don't want to run it partially. You do it right or you don't do it at all," he said.

Wozniak says besides the 160 people, his operation employs are the suppliers. His Sherburne County farmer is also impacted by the loss of more than a quarter of a million pounds of fresh potatoes.

Back in April, Hammer said that they're not considering pushing the fair back , shortening it or imposing significant restrictions on fair-goers, meaning it will either happen as normal or it will be canceled outright.

Below is Jerry Hammer's Friday morning statement in full:

We've been working hard and doing our very best with preparations for the 2020 State Fair. The picture was cloudy in March, but things have cleared up considerably since then. Right now is the time of year when things need to really take off if we're going to have a fair, but we can see that we're out of runway and can't get off the ground. There will be no State Fair this year.

Like everything during the past few months, it's complex and difficult. The State Fair is built on a vast network of agriculturists, vendors, artists, entertainers, competitors, amusement operators, sponsors, State Fair staff and thousands more who always give their very best. They are the pillars of the fair, and almost all have been affected during the past two months. Some are doing okay, but many have eroded including some who provide our biggest and best programs. It's a challenging time for our determined young people in youth agriculture programs. More and more livestock exhibitors, entertainers and attraction operators are concerned with going on the road this summer. Some commercial exhibitors are past their deadlines for getting products, and now there's even a question of adequate supplies for food vendors. And many are having trouble finding people who are willing to work in crowds.

This will have a big impact on thousands of businesses and the tens of thousands of people whose talent, dedication and love bring the fair to life. We understand exactly what they're going through because we're going through the same thing.

We'll face those challenges because the most important thing is your health. No one knows what things will be like at fair time, but we need to make decisions now based on what we know today, not how we hope things will be in August. And right now, all of the science says that if things go well, we'll still be walking very carefully in three months. That's far from ready to run a mass gathering marathon like the State Fair. Can you see social distancing on a Park & Ride bus, or at the Bandshell? One at a time on the Giant Slide? Can you imagine standing six feet apart in line for cookies? Me neither.

The State Fair needs to be a full-on celebration. That's what makes it very special for so many of us, including young fair fan Addie who is 5 years old. She starts kindergarten this fall and she said, "I love the fair. There are a hundred things to do there. And it's my birthday. It's my favorite time of year."

Millions of people love the fair just like Addie, even if it's not their birthday. And that's exactly why we can't have a fair this year. We owe it to you now, and we owe it to posterity to give you the very best that we possibly can in a safe environment. By taking the tough road today, we guarantee that the fair's future remains hopeful and bright.

A month ago, my good friend Carlos wrote, "If there's no fair this year, it's because they love us and want to see EVERYone next year." He's right. That's the heart of the matter. We want to see you all for many years to come, when we can celebrate in true State Fair style.

So this isn't a difficult decision. It's the only decision. It's the right thing to do. As we go through this strange summer, we're extremely grateful for the understanding and support of everyone who makes the State Fair possible – especially the millions of fair fans from around the globe. The best thing we can all do right now is to help the world recover and heal. In the meantime, your team of State Fair pros is working hard to come back bigger, better, stronger and smarter in '21. We'll see you next year at the Great Minnesota Get-Back-Together.

More from CBS News

- **Minnesota gubernatorial candidate Lisa Demuth calls for end of Iran war**
- **Blind artist earns third State Fair of Texas creative arts honor with handmade lace**
- **Target Field protesters urge Pohlman family to "stand up for democracy"**
- **Opening weekend of State Fair of Texas brings thousands as new pricing takes effect**
- **Suspected drunken driver crashes into Minnesota cemetery, home of Sinclair Lewis' grave**

In:

- **COVID-19**

© 2020 CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Featured Local Savings

CBS News Minnesota Live

CBS News Minnesota

- **Minnesota gubernatorial candidate Lisa Demuth calls for end of Iran war**
- **Blind artist earns third State Fair of Texas creative arts honor with handmade lace**
- **Target Field protesters urge Pohlman family to "stand up for democracy"**
- **Opening weekend of State Fair of Texas brings thousands as new pricing takes effect**
- **Suspected drunken driver crashes into Minnesota cemetery, home of Sinclair Lewis' grave**
- **NYC's Global Citizen Festival 2020 canceled due to no rain**
- **Minnesota sailor returns from USS Lincoln duty to find apartment ransacked**
- **Rangers beat Twins 6-2, push AL West race to final day**

Featured Political News Iran War Latest NFL Scores College Football Rankings Follow Us On YouTube Facebook Instagram TikTok X CBS News Minnesota Meet the Team Program Guide Contact Us Advertise With Us Terms & Conditions Sitemap Regulation Public File for WCCO-TV Public Inspection File Help FCC Applications EEO Report Privacy Policy California Notice Your Privacy Choices Terms of Use Minors' Privacy Policy Company About Paramount Advertise With Paramount Join Our Talent Community Help Feedback Contact the Ombudsman

©2026 CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[View CBS News In CBS News App](#) [Open Chrome](#) [Safari](#) [Continue](#)