



Statement from the Marion County Fair:

The board of the Marion County Fair presents this statement in response to a July 31, 2014 story by reporter Kara Kenney of WRTV/6 and theindychannel.com:

The WRTV/6 story calls into question possible safety violations at the Marion County Fairgrounds, and why a fair board member recently was expelled from his post.

- On July 16, 2014, Jack Haeffling, who served as a member of the Marion County Fair board of directors for two-and-a-half years of a three-year term, was removed from the board by unanimous vote of his fellow board members. The removal was the result of violations of Article 5, Section C of the Marion County Agricultural & 4-H Fair bylaws: ordering thousands of dollars in equipment and services for the fairgrounds without knowledge or approval of the board, and failure to acknowledge board chain of command.

Mr. Haeffling's expulsion from the board was not a punishment for "whistle-blowing," as he has claimed. The board's action to expel was put into motion prior to the time the board knew about his calls to WRTV/6.

- Over the past several years, the Marion County Fair board has approved and instituted a wide range of major infrastructure improvements. Among these are installation of city water and sewer lines, roofing replacements, siding replacements and additions, painting, landscaping, and on-going plumbing and electrical upgrades.

Prior to our very successful 2014 fair, which ran June 20-29, all of the requisite inspections were conducted by county and state agencies and the Marion County Fairgrounds passed every inspection. The 10-day fair was extraordinarily successful, and was conducted without incident.

Since the fair's conclusion, as a result of Mr. Haeffling's calls to WRTV/6, a team of inspectors from the Indianapolis Fire Department, State Fire Marshal's Office and City of Indianapolis Code Enforcement visited the Marion County Fairgrounds for a nearly three-hour inspection on July 29. A WRTV/6 videographer also was on hand throughout the inspection; reporter Kenney was not present.

The full report will not be available to the board until next week, but inspectors noted on July 29 that no major violations had been found. Our board looks forward to reviewing the full findings when they are made available to us. We immediately will address and correct any problems that may have been discovered by the inspectors, and we will continue our on-going upgrades to the Marion County Fairgrounds as our annual budget allows.

Additionally, a representative of IOSHA conducted an inspection today, July 31, 2014, and, once again, per his on-site statement to fair officials, no major violations were found.

- The 2014 Marion County Fair was the most successful fair in 10 years, thanks to outstanding community and sponsor support, excellent programming, a hard-working volunteer board, and great weather. Our fair board will be welcoming several new members soon as the terms of several current members expire, and we are looking forward to the start of planning for the 85th annual Marion County Fair, June 26-July 5, 2015.