The Antrim County Fair provides an important annual outlet for education, exhibition, and demonstration of agriculture, home economics, science, and art. It is a recreation-based outlet for county residents and visitors to share and display their hobbies and interests with special emphasis on youth. Its goal is to provide a fun and educational experience for all.

In 2025 the Antrim County Fair Board put all hands on deck to rally and continue to build on our fair's legacy of community as outlined in the above mission statement.

We partnered with thirty-four local businesses to put on our five-day fair. Those businesses' donations helped to fund our events, fair books, and website. We had many individuals who donated their time, energy, and personal funds to create a fun and meaningful week.

In 2024, the Antrim County Fair took a loss of nearly $9000.00, so 2025 brought many changes and cutbacks. We cut some community-favorite activities, including the $4000.00 horse pull. While many wanted to keep things as they had always been, the reality was that things had to change. The Fair Board worked hard throughout 2025 to find a balance between cutting costs and saving our beloved fair. We simplified wherever we could and made the difficult decision to charge admission for the first time. This decision was by far the most challenging of the year, but the board believed our planned Saturday offerings were worth the fee. Though there were many hiccups and struggles during fair week, all of those involved gained much experience and the overall community response was positive.

With the board's decision to become a fully open fair, all 4-H and MSU backing and funds were pulled. The Fair's new Livestock Committee created all new paperwork and record books, planned shows, hired judges, organized the market livestock auction, and invested time and fair funds into cooling the animals during the intense August heat. Through the struggles of setting up shows for the first time, the committee learned a lot and will be implementing those lessons in the coming years. Our auction hosted 33 bidders, 15 of those bidders became buyers through the evening and received our gratitude and photos with their exhibitor(s). The shows and auction went well, and all animals made it safely through the high temperatures.

The Still Exhibit barn hosted lots of crafts and photography and had some truly breathtaking amateur artistic creations. Ou fair book art contest drew many talented entries. More than twenty local bakers entered our pie baking contest, a 700% participation increase from 2024. We had not anticipated that large of a group but now know the immense pool of talent in our county and plan to have multiple judges to panel our 2026 contest.

Our buyers' dinner, Elvis Tribute, Fun Run, and youth activities from crafts to archery were all exciting highlights to our fair week. Demonstrations of the Star Township Jaws of Life and our local K-9 teams educated many on important first responder duties. Free Rein Donkeys

and our fair Petting Farm allowed for some hands-on interaction with local farm animals, while the Raptor show educated about some local wildlife.

Youth, and adults, exhibited more than Seventy animals. Thirty-five of those animals sold at auction as sixteen individual sales – nine rabbits as pens of three, three guineas as a pen, twelve market chickens as pens of three, three production chickens as a pen, four hogs, two goats, and one lamb. Eight more animals/pens were donated to be offered at auction as direct fundraising for the market livestock program.

When you add the financial donations from the gate, youth poster contest, and Farm Bureau Pancake Breakfast with proceeds from the fun run, pie contest, and silent auction, the fair rallied quite well financially. We turned last year's near $9,000 net loss into a net profit of more than $6,000. This was a year of extreme price cuts, so we expect to see a far closer margin in 2026 as we build on lessons learned. There are still changes to be made, partnerships to be formed, and cuts to be considered. However, the Fair Board is working hard to keep this small, but mighty fine fair around for many more years.

This year, we have moved our dates to align with the Rubber Ducky Festival to share a little more love with our host village. The fair will still host small and large animal shows and the market livestock auction. We will have our still exhibit barn, food booth, silent auction, pie contest, educational events and demonstrations, petting farm and opportunities for animal interactions, Elvis, first responder demonstrations, kids' activities, and so much more.

In 2026, the Fair Board looks forward to strengthening old and new partnerships with more members of the community. 2025 cost us $27,074.40 and our budget for our four-day fair in 2026 is $35,250.00. We will need people and funds once more as we put on our fair in its new, abbreviated timeline. The board does plan to charge a low entrance fee on all days this year to help offset the higher costs of keeping the fair going. We have been informed that 2026 will be the last year that the Antrim County Fair will receive our $6,000 traditional donation from the Antrim County Board of Commissioners, so efforts are still being made to cut back on expenses and create a fair that is solvent. The board is endeavoring to keep the fair affordable for attendees while ensuring stability in its operation and upkeep. We look forward to maintaining the Antrim County Fair as a place of community, education, and agriculture.