

Commissioner's column

Recently we announced the addition of tech company Bandwidth as a major new sponsor for the N.C. State Fair. With the company's support, we are planning to offer accessABILITY Day at the fair on Oct. 17 from 8 a.m. to noon.

This is a special day for people with different abilities. Beginning at 9 a.m., rides, games and vendors will operate without lights and sound. Music on stages will be acoustic and guests can compete in specially designed inclusive and/or adaptive on-the-spot competitions.

You can read more about this partnership and accessABILITY Day on page 5 of the paper. We are excited about this day, Bandwidth's sponsorship and what it will mean to people who may not have been able to attend the fair before.

People's love of the State Fair and Mountain State Fair boils down to the personal experiences, lifelong memories and the sense of joy and nostalgia you feel in coming together in celebration. Members of my staff and I are proud that the fair can be more inclusive of people of all abilities and are looking forward to hosting this day with Bandwidth.

The feedback about this announcement has been positive and heartfelt, and in reading the comments, I know this will be a great addition to the fair.

We have been blessed this year to have many businesses and organizations sign on as fair sponsors and we truly appreciate their support, whether they are new to the fair or a long-term sponsor.

The State Fair has lost \$9.5 million in revenue due to cancellation of the fair in 2020 and most scheduled events on the grounds. The State Fair is an enterprise fund that relies on the revenue generated by rentals and the fair to operate and pay staff.

Putting on a fair is a big and expensive undertaking, which is why the support of our sponsors is so important. I want to personally say "thank you."