



STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

2024 REVIEW

24 DAYS OF FUN

Parks, Trails and Environment Committee
January 6, 2025





2024 ATTENDANCE

2,385,855

2023 ATTENDANCE

2,341,449



52,000

Members of the Military and their families visited utilizing a special discount



17,300

First Responder Day and their families visited utilizing a special discount.



12,000

Creative Arts entries

4,434

Blue ribbons awarded

20

New shopping booths joined the Fair family

60

Texas Music Artists performed in the throughout the grounds as part of the Lone Star Music Series

\$180,000



Grand Champion Market Steer of the Big Tex Youth Livestock Auction broke a record this year



26,360

Pounds of fresh produce donated by the Big Tex Urban Farms in 2024



195,000

Pounds of food collected and donated to the North Texas Food Bank

More than 300 nonprofit leaders

attended Community Engagement Day at the Fair



76

Animal births at the Livestock Birthing Barn (43 pigs, 12 goats, 8 lambs, and 13 calves)



71,250

folks attended 15 free Rodeo events at the Fair



212,003 fairgoers in attendance for the Allstate® Red River Rivalry Game Day



60,000

taquitos were hand rolled and sold in 24 days at Tony's Taco Shop.

400,000

Prizes were won on the State Fair Midway, with an estimated value of \$1.4 million



13,190

Total livestock entries in the fair's various livestock and agricultural events

3,099

Activities happened across the fairgrounds, including shows like Dino Time with Professor T. Tex, live music shows, and more.



100,000

rides were taken on the iconic Texas Star Ferris Wheel



\$1.3 MILLION

Awarded in 2024 in new college scholarships to more than 225 students

Fair Operations: Key Takeaways & Observations

- Implementation of modified pedestrian gate ingress/egress successful. Included changes to queuing, screening, admissions, and brand experience.
- Launch of redesigned Nimitz Drive concessions zone successful. Well received by concessionaires and guests.
- Redesign and refurbishment of Nimitz Terrace allowed for substantial increase in foot traffic at commercial exhibit zone.
- New experience and wayfinding elements placed throughout park; provided guests new points of interest and engagement opportunities.



Fair Operations: Key Takeaways & Observations (cont.)

- Shifting attendance from weekend to weekday visits through attraction, marketing, and promotion initiatives continues to positively trend (shift of 4.7% since 2018).
- Weather remained hot (mid-90s+) through first two full weeks of the Fair
- Newly formed Admissions Team (Gate Ops, Parking, Ticket Sales) worked well together – launched new Gate Captain program and enhanced tram routes
- ACT cleaning team continued to do an outstanding job keeping the fairgrounds clean and added some overnight washdown and detailed cleaning



Public Safety & Security Enhancements

- Conducted Detailed Site Assessment to determine risks & vulnerabilities – became the foundation for our 2024 Plan
- Andy Frain Services – year two – planning, recruiting, training
- Pedestrian Gate redesign – hardening the perimeter
- Access control measures – increased screening stations (OpenGates), fewer pedestrian gates, etc.
- State Fair Command – hub for all operational communication, incident management and ready for EOC activity
- Drone detection services played a key role in daily ops



2024 Public Safety & Security: Plan & Key Initiatives (cont.)

- Approximately 200 police officers per day provided law enforcement and strategic policing operations to the Fair on a 24-hour basis. Roles included but were not limited to. State Fair pays 100% of all costs for DPD.
 - Command/control, pedestrian screening, interior walking beats and parking lot patrols, traffic management, SWAT, explosive ordinance, supplemental perimeter patrols, and motorcycles
- Safety Team members staffed the 15 "stands" within the interior footprint, provided walking patrols and crowd management assistance with the parade, major concerts, and other special events
- Gun policy and bag policy changes were implemented with no issues
- Extensive training extended to the entire SFT staff focused on emergency response, de-escalation, situational awareness, standard response protocol, and Know Your Role
- Tabletop exercises with Public Service partners, campus partners, and full-time staff to test emergency readiness and standard protocols



Economic Impact

- According to a study on the 2023 State Fair, the estimated total economic impact of the State Fair is **between \$562 - \$680 million**
 - Figure does not include the additional impact from the Texas Auto Show
- Approximately **7,000 people employed** during the annual State Fair of Texas (2,500 by the State Fair)
- Estimated **22.8% of Fairgoers are from outside the 13 county DFW area**, spending an estimated **\$59 million** outside the park in the DFW area



Traffic Enhancements: Trailblazing / Wayfinding Signage

- SFT provided nearly \$3 million in January of 2023 to the City of Dallas for replacement of inoperable message boards surrounding Fair Park
- City of Dallas was able to procure and install six new Digital Message Signs ahead of the 2024 Fair
- Messages were customized by day and the program worked well
- For the remaining sign holders we continued with the vinyl covers that we have used the past two Fairs
- Six additional DMS boards have been procured and will be installed during late 2024 / early 2025
- Remaining signs and relocations of sign structures will happen in the coming year. Will get wayfinding messages in key spots that do not have them now (Haskell)



Big Tex Choice Awards “Savory” Finalists



**DOMINICAN FRITURA DOG
BY JUSTIN MARTINEZ**



**THE DROWNING TAQUITOS
BY TONY & TERRY BEDNAR**



**HIPPIE CHIPS
BY ROSE & TOM DESCHENES**



**HOT CHICK-IN-PANCAKE
POPPERS BY PALMER &
AMANDA FORTUNE**



**TEXAS FRIED BURNT
END BOMBS
BY NICK BERT**

Big Tex Choice Awards “Sweet” Finalists



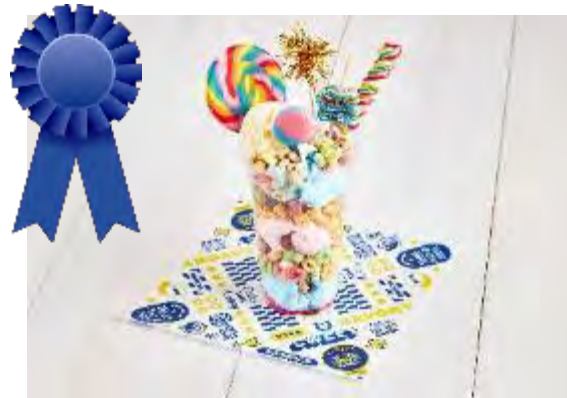
**COTTON CANDY BACON ON A STICK
BY ISAAC ROUSSO**



**NEVINS NUTTY BAR-LASKA
BY TAMI NEVINS MAYES & JOSEY MAYES**



**STRAWBERRY POP-TARTS® BEIGNETFFLE
BY JUSTIN MARTINEZ**



**TEXAS SUGAR RUSH PICKLES
BY HEATHER PERKINS**



**TROPICAL TWO-STEP PUNCH
BY BINH TRAN**

Dinosaurs at the Lagoon

- Dinosaurs at the Lagoon has become a family favorite in its two years at the Fair
- Featured 12 life-sized dinosaurs that roamed the lands of Texas
- The area also included an expanded play area for kids, new dining options, plenty of seating and the best view on the grounds
- Allowed the State Fair to utilize an area of the grounds that was previously under-utilized



College Football at the Cotton Bowl

- **State Fair Classic (52,323 attendance)**
 - Saturday, September 28, 2024
 - Grambling State University vs. Prairie View A&M University
 - Played in Dallas since 1925

- **Allstate Red River Rivalry (92,100 attendance)**
 - Saturday, October 7, 2023
 - University of Texas Longhorns vs. University of Oklahoma Sooners
 - Played in Dallas since 1929





SEC Nation & Barstool Sports at the State Fair

- The first SEC-edition of the Red River Rivalry had **7.9 million viewers on ABC** – the second-largest audience for the game since 2009 and fourth-largest on record.

- ***SEC Nation***, the SEC Network’s traveling pre-game show descended on the State Fair of Texas, in addition to ***Marty & McGee*** and ***The Paul Finebaum Show***.

- ***Barstool College Football Show*** made its State Fair debut for the 2024 Red River Rivalry.

- ***Barstool College Football Show*** and Dave Portnoy’s State Fair food reviews garnered more than **16.1 views**, and **growing, across all social platforms** – nearly 10.2 million views on Instagram, more than 2.6 million views on Facebook, more than 2 million views on TikTok, and nearly 1.3 million views on YouTube.



Texas-Sized Drone Shows

- From Thursday, October 3, to Sunday, October 6, State Fair of Texas attendees witnessed the Fair's first-ever drone show, Stars Over Texas
- A Four-Night Drone Show event presented by Ford as part of the world reveal of the new Expedition.
- Fairgoers near and far saw Big Tex in the sky for this limited time attraction at the Fair.
- The four nightly shows began immediately following the Mattress Firm Illumination Sensation along the Esplanade at approximately 8:25 p.m.
- The drone shows were produced in partnership with Coppell-based Sky Elements.



1,500 drones + 100 pyrotechnic drones were part of the Ford vehicle reveal, and 500 drones were used for the remaining shows.

Livestock, Horse Shows, & Rodeo

- \$180,000 Grand Champion Steer sale price
- 7,698 Ag Awareness Day students
- 76 Animal Births in Big Tex's Birthing Barn
- 112,000+ visitors through Big Tex's Discovery Farm
- 71,500+ rodeo attendance
- 20,411 Livestock, Horse, & Rodeo competitors

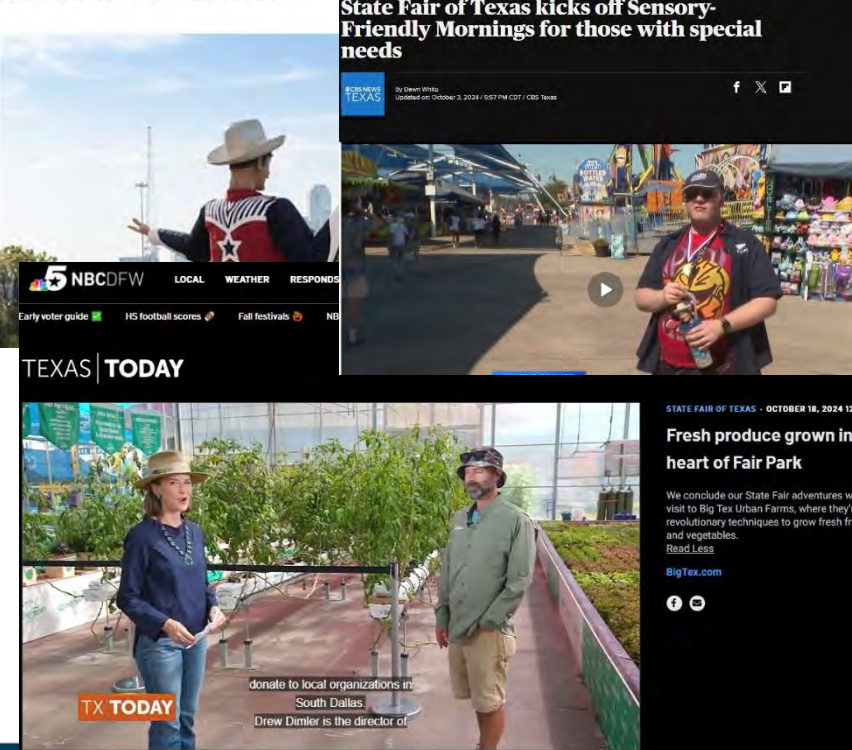


2024 Mission Moments in the Media

In 2024, the State Fair of Texas received worldwide coverage, including local, regional, national, and international media outlets. More importantly, the media relations team secured more than **330** stories about the Fair's nonprofit mission this year.



- Initiatives Highlighted:**
- Big Tex Youth Livestock Auction – 120
 - Sensory Friendly Mornings – 114
 - Big Tex Scholarship Program – 49
 - Nonprofit Grant Program – 32
 - Big Tex Business Masterclass – 18
 - State Fair Cares Food Drive – 17
 - Big Tex Urban Farms – 15
 - Juanita Craft Humanitarian Awards – 5



During Fair Community Events

- **Approximately 135 faith leaders and community partners** came together for fellowship during the annual Pastors Luncheon hosted by the State Fair of Texas during the Fair on October 3, 2024.
- The State Fair of Texas and the Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House & Steering Committee hosted the **Seventh Annual Juanita Craft Humanitarian Awards**, honoring seven individuals following in Mrs. Craft's footsteps. **Nearly 200 community members** were in attendance during the Fair on October 13, 2024.
- **More than 350 nonprofit leaders** attended Community Engagement Day, which was hosted by the State Fair of Texas during the Fair on October 15, 2024.
- **Approximately 1,100 admission tickets** were donated to local nonprofit organizations for the community to enjoy the State Fair.



Big Tex Gives Back

In 2023, the State Fair's combined Philanthropic & Fair Park Giving* totaled nearly
\$15.8 million

COMMUNITY GIVING

Since 2016
\$6.9 Million
Committed

In 2024
\$917,000
Budgeted

- In 2023, more than 100 organizations received more than \$662,000 in project funding through community grants and sponsorships.
- SFT hosted eight signature events including Community Engagement Day, NEXT Fest, and the Juanita Craft Humanitarian Awards.
- Fifteen graduates from the 2024 Big Tex Business Masterclass.

FAIR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Past 5 years, nearly
\$32 Million
Invested

In 2023
\$9.3 Million
Invested

- Through Historical Preservation of Fair Park, the State Fair has given more than \$41 million to the City of Dallas for Fair Park since 2015.
- Net proceeds from the State Fair are reinvested into Fair Park's upkeep and maintenance.
- More than \$288,000 in financial donations to support Fair Park Museum programming.

**Note: Philanthropic & Fair Park Giving includes giving through community outreach programs (e.g., Community Giving through Grants and Sponsorships, Signature Programs, Big Tex Scholarship Program, Big Tex Urban Farms, etc.), funding for upkeep and historical preservation of Fair Park, annual rent to the City of Dallas with the agreement that the money must go towards Fair Park, and other Fair Park improvements and State Fair Operations to help continue hosting one of the premier and largest annual events in the world.*

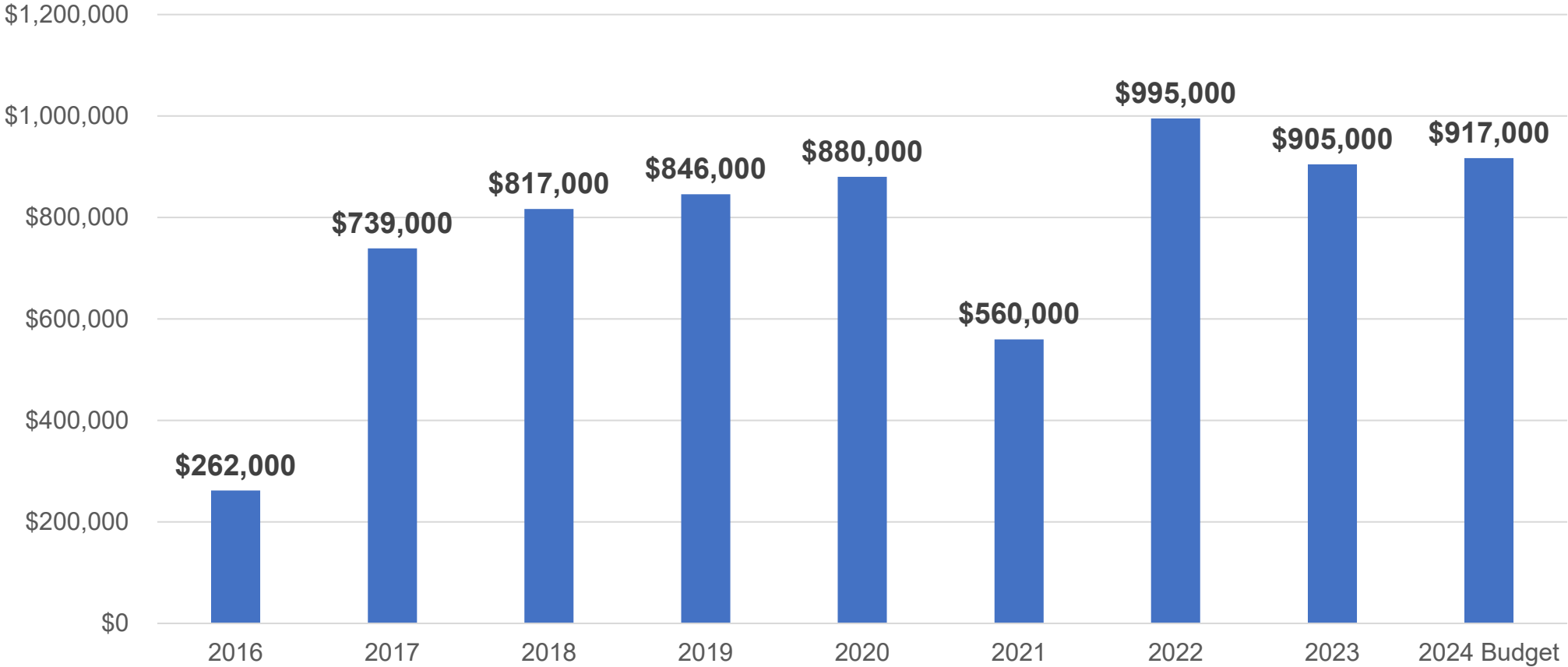
Fair Park Giving – 2024 Highlights

Due to the results of the 2023 State Fair of Texas, our largest community program and fundraiser of the year:

- In 2024, **\$4.16 million** was given by the State Fair to the City of Dallas for maintenance and projects at Fair Park due to the results, in addition to annual rent of \$1.75 million paid to the City of Dallas with the agreement that the money must go towards Fair Park.
 - **Highlights include:**
 - Cotton Bowl Renovations – Phase I
- In addition, **more than \$2.4 million** has been spent by the State Fair during 2024 on other Fair Park improvements and State Fair operations.
 - **Highlights include:**
 - Nimitz Terrace upgrade - \$475K – removed uneven asphalt and replaced with concrete, added tree wells, utility upgrades, and proper grading – an immediate enhancement for Dallas Trinity FC games and a lasting improvement
 - Tower Building HVAC - \$200K – replaced 5 RTUs with brand new units
 - Fair Park Paving - \$460K+ - new concrete at Bulls Alley, Nimitz-Grand connector, Keating (from Nimitz to Cotton Bowl Circle, 1st Avenue pavers, and much more
 - Security Command Center - \$500K+ - can be utilized for Fair Park events all year
 - Various Fair Park Utility Upgrades - \$340K – electrical, plumbing, irrigation, lighting, and Food & Fiber Building HVAC

Philanthropic Giving Through Community Affairs

State Fair of Texas Community Giving

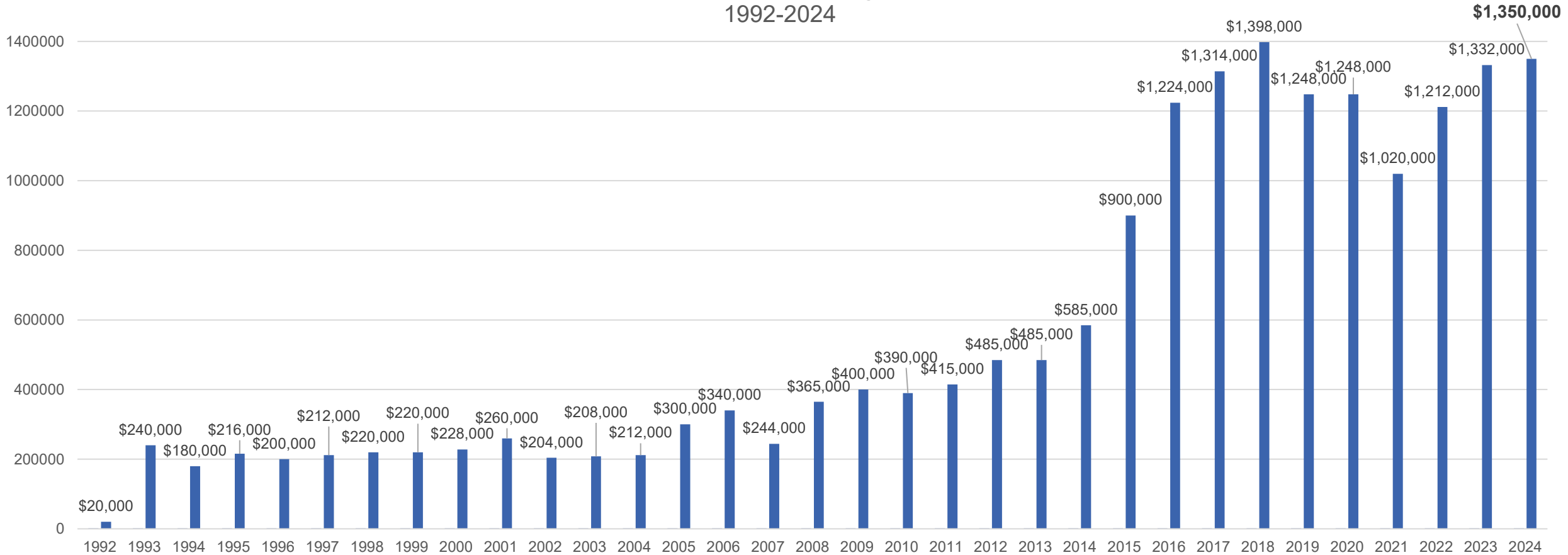


Community giving includes sponsorships, supporting programs through funding, in-kind donations, technical assistance and training, staff commitment, and investments made through the State Fair’s signature programs, benefiting South Dallas/Fair Park area organizations.

Note: Budget is not inclusive of funding provided for the Big Tex Scholarship Program or Big Tex Urban Farms by the State Fair of Texas, or funding provided to our Fair Park partners. .

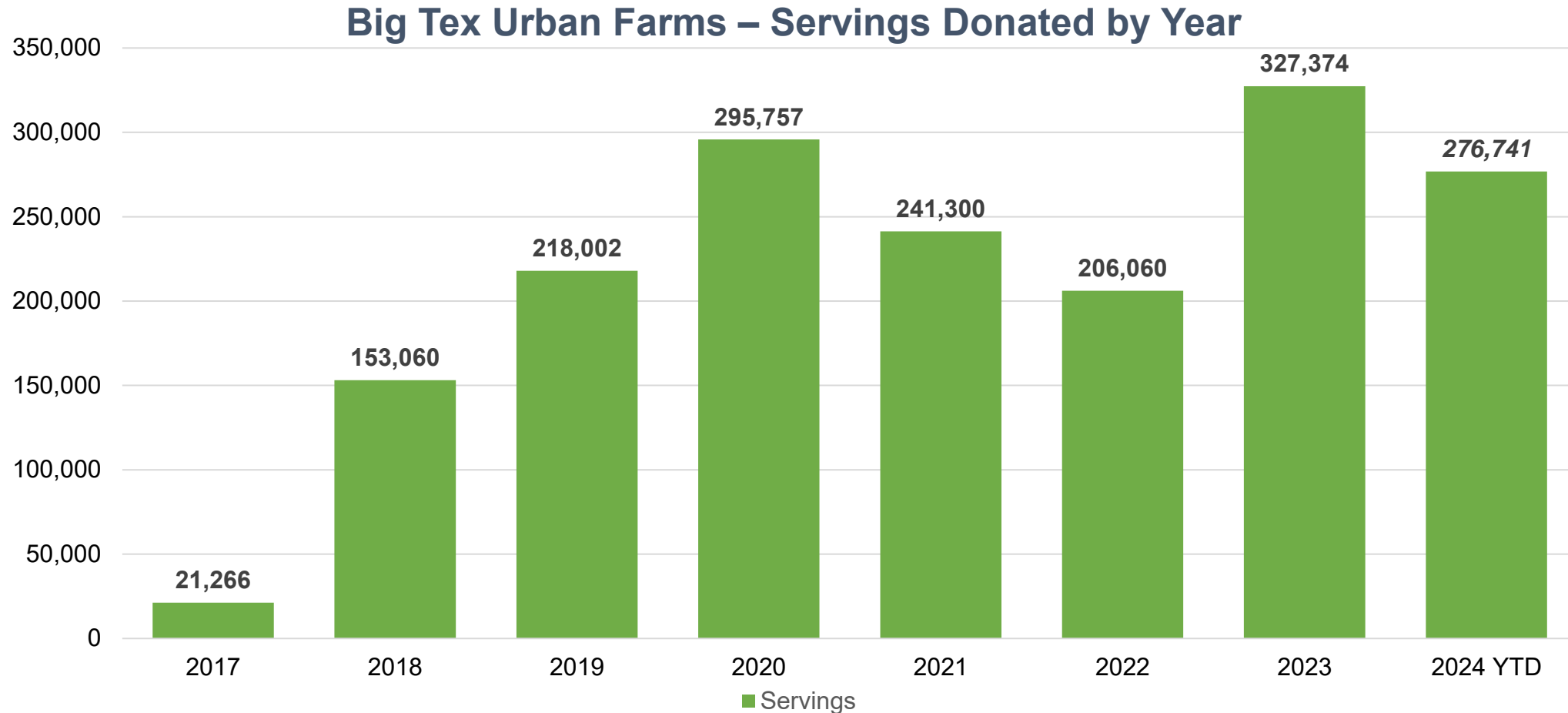
Philanthropic Giving Through Big Tex Scholarships

Big Tex Scholarship Program
Historical Awards by Year
1992-2024



Note: The Big Tex Scholarship Program does not live under Community Affairs but is a key signature program the Fair offers to the local and greater Texas community.

Philanthropic Giving Through Big Tex Urban Farms



Since its inception, Big Tex Urban Farms has donated **more than 1.7 million servings of fresh produce** to the South Dallas/Fair Park community.

Looking Forward: Key Areas of Focus

- Public Safety & Security resources
- SFT Administration building renovation & expansion
- New parking booths / self-serve coupon kiosks
- Utility upgrades (electrical as focus)
- Lighting and paving
- Guest experience initiatives
- Parking / Trams / traffic management needs
- Parkwide fiber grid
- Livestock facility upgrades
- Back of house / employee areas
- HVAC / air quality investments
- Park beautification improvements





SEE YOU IN 2025!

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
THRU
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19**

