



**READY TO**

# **CELEBRATE**

**A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR PLANNING FESTIVALS & EVENTS**

*Presented by the Indiana Office of Tourism Development  
and the Indiana State Festivals Association*

HONEST to GOODNESS  
**INDIANA**  
SINCE 1816

INDIANA STATE  
**Festivals**  
ASSOCIATION

# INDIANA'S HOW TO OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS PREFACE

Dear Festival Chairman:

Greetings from the Indiana Office of Tourism Development! Thank you for taking a leadership role with your festival. Indiana's wonderful array of festivals is nationally-recognized and wouldn't be possible without the dedicated work of community leaders like you. Festivals are a significant contributor to our state's tourism economy. Equally important is the fact that they provide the perfect opportunity to showcase your community's rich history, culture and creative spirit.

If you refer to the Indiana State Festivals Association's Festival Guide, you'll see just how diverse Indiana is; with festivals for every season, holiday and interest. Sharing our heritage through events like yours will take on added importance during Indiana's Bicentennial celebration in 2016.

The Indiana State Festivals Association and the Indiana Office of Tourism Development have provided this comprehensive manual to help you plan every stage of your event, from concept to post-festival evaluation. The guidelines herein are based on years of experience and expert planning, and can help you produce a well-organized, profitable festival that's as much fun for your committee as it is for your community and your visitors.

We're confident you'll find this manual invaluable in preparing your festival, which we hope is a fun-filled success!

Sincerely,



Mark Newman  
Executive Director  
Indiana Office of Tourism Development

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Indiana is planning a party! Indiana's Bicentennial Celebration will be a statewide party and reunion hosted by committees throughout the state and everyone who has ever lived, worked, or attended school here is invited to attend.

The Bicentennial Celebration will showcase Indiana from automobiles to zinnias, and every community will have one thing in common. They all will be loaded with a generous portion of "Hoosier Hospitality!"

The officers of the Indiana State Festivals Association have prepared this manual for the Indiana Tourism Division. It is intended to be used by festival and event chairpersons, both new and established, as a guideline for producing successful activities in their communities.

While the committee realizes that no manual can cover all situations in all type of festivals, it's their sincere hope that they have provided the guidelines and methods to help you find the answers to your questions. So you can extend your community's hand of Hoosier Hospitality, and have as much fun as possible.

Kim Stevens, ISFA President  
Larry Bemis, Editor

# INDIANA'S HOW TO OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

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The concepts and information presented in this Festival “How To” book are not intended as all-inclusive methods of planning and organizing a festival, but instead are offered as guidelines to be used at the reader’s discretion.

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# SECTION I

## PLANNING YOUR FESTIVAL

Festival, fair, or event-by whatever name you call it, your decision to do something for your community could turn out to be the most fun you'll have in a long time. The category your activity qualifies in depends on how you organize and plan it.

### **Forming a Study Committee**

The first step in planning your *fun* event is to form a study committee. This committee should be made up of no less than three, and no more than five people who are well-acquainted with local history, attractions, and the general makeup of your area.

The fundamental task of this group is to establish goals and objectives, select a theme and name, determine the time of year, recommend possible locations, establish tentative dates, and finally recruit people to carry out the task!

Let's take a close look at each of these fundamental functions.

### **How to Establish Goals and Objectives**

Any number of factors can affect the established goal of your study committee, not the least of which would be the finances and help available.

The study committee should establish their goals and objectives based on the scope of your festival and the needs of your community, but the following may help in establishing these goals.

What kind of happening would our community support?

How big an area do we want to draw from?

Do we want to make a profit?

Can we generate community support?

How much seed money can we generate?

How many potential volunteers can we count on?

Regardless of the limitations or expanse of your festival, the study committee must establish obtainable goals and objectives for your first-time effort.

Once the goals are established, the study committee should select a theme and a name.

### **How to Select a Theme and Name**

In selecting a name, the sky is the limit. The study committee can refer to the Indiana State Festival Guide where you will literally find everything from soup to nuts used for names of community festivals.

There are three (3) areas of your community that the committee should consider when selecting a theme and name. They are the 1) *history* of your area, 2) *local attractions*, and 3) *physical makeup* of your area.

#### **1. History**

Pioneers, Indians, battles, or blunders? What happened in your area to make it unique or different? Look for "firsts" of the past. "First home of a circus" and

“First street car” have both been used for festival themes. What makes your community different? Does a tree grow out of your courthouse roof? Are all the left-handed monkey wrenches in the world manufactured in your area? Seek out what’s different and unique and build your event around it.

Remember, nostalgia is in! The public will drive hundreds of miles to walk through an old house or cross an old bridge.

### ***2. Local attractions***

The committee should take two steps back and look at the physical makeup of your area-world’s largest horseradish patch and the state’s oldest tree have been popular tourist points of interest in communities. What do you have in yours?

### ***3. Physical makeup of area***

One of the most enjoyable advantages of festival planning is the liberalism allowed in community bragging. There is no Guinness Book of Records for such things as oldest tree or tallest midget. One of our neighboring states has three “Biggest Tree” Festivals. The disputed claim has continued for years. The number of tourists who visit each community to decide for themselves who is correct is reflected in the cash drawers of the local merchants. Good luck to the person who gets out a tape measure to settle the dispute!

### ***How to Select a Time of Year***

Many factors and a lot of research should be considered before you select the time of year to hold your event. Spring or fall is the popular festival season with the general public. This is also the most crowded time for competition. The first factor your study committee must consider is the timing with your theme. You could hardly hold a pumpkin festival in the spring or a Redbud festival in the fall. If your adopted theme has an historic time frame, then stay as close to that time frame as possible.

If your developed theme demands no time frame, then go to step #2 and research your competition. Get the current copy of the Indiana State Festival Guide (Write to the Indiana State Festivals Association, 700 Walton Street, Rockville, IN 47872). Look up your area and list all the festivals, fairs, and events within fifty (50) miles of your area (the normal small festival target area). Block out their dates on a calendar and see what dates are open. (Caution: Even more festivals and events will spring up during the Hoosier Bicentennial. Some local events may not appear in the Festival Guide so be sure to contact all local town boards, chambers of commerce, service clubs, etc., in your area to determine all the competition.)

Many areas of the state have county or area festival associations, or festivals are being coordinated by convention bureaus or chambers. Ask your local bureau or chamber if there is such an organization in your area.

### ***How to Select a Location***

Again, everything in your planning should revolve around your theme.

There are as many types of activities as there are grains of sand; therefore, your theme may well dictate the location. You would hardly hold an event built around the local strawberry patches in a school gym. (You could look for a field adjacent to the strawberry patch.) On the other hand, if your original theme is an indoor affair, it would require extra effort and expense to recreate this condition

in a ten acre field!

Availability will also determine where you hold your event. Early in your planning, check with your local law enforcement agencies if you plan to close any local streets. There are strict regulations about closing state highways, and as planners, we sometimes forget that Main Street is also a numbered state highway.

### ***How to Select a Date***

By selecting a date (i.e., the first weekend in June of next year), you establish a definite goal that can be published to the media along with your other tentative plans. This will assist you greatly as the study committee begins recruiting officers to produce your plans and achieve your goals.

Your selected date will be the result of your “time of year” research and should reflect the thinking not only of the study committee, but also that of the community leaders on the broadest scale possible. This point in your planning is critical! You have laid the basic foundation for a major happening in your community. An event that, if properly executed, will involve most of the people in your community.

### ***How to Recruit Officers***

The last duty for the study committee is to recruit officers for your event. *In no case should the study committee ever exclude themselves from this recruitment.* Very often the members of the study committee will want to follow through with their plans as the first officers of your festival.

There are certain qualifications for choosing the key personnel to head up a festival. First of all, the activity can be managed by either a small group of officers or a group of officers with a board of directors. Small town events are more successful if they are managed by a small number of officials. The committee should have a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and either a second vice-president, or an “at large” member.

In some cases the number of officials could be as effective with only three members, namely president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer. By all means have an uneven number of officials or planners.

A basic planning group established to start a festival should include as many of the various organizations in your community as possible, unless the organization does not condone such activities. For example, some churches do not want to be a part of an event that includes alcoholic beverages.

The person who is given the responsibility of starting a festival should be first of all congenial, able to assume responsibility, humble to a point, and should not give preferential treatment to any special group or type of people. When a planning group organizes, they should keep in mind the needs of the officers to produce a successful festival. The ideal organization has a general chairman, and a co-chairman (or an understudy) for each major area of responsibility. This assures passing on the expertise and fine tuning of a committee’s action acquired during the repeat years, and still adds the fresh ideas of a new leader.

If you are not fortunate enough to have a large pool of leaders from which to draw recruits, the next best thing is to switch areas of responsibility among the group so that there is always someone available to take over on any job in a

crisis!

Basically, the duties of the officers of a special event are no different from any other type of organization. A typical job description of the office of President (Chairman), Vice-President (Vice- Chairman), Secretary, and Treasurer might be as follows.

### ***Duties of Officers***

**PRESIDENT**-The President shall preside at all meetings of the organization. She/he shall be an ex-officio, with rights to vote in the case of a tie, and shall be a member of all committees. She/he shall communicate to the Board of Directors such matters and make suggestions as may, in her/his opinion, tend to promote the prosperity and welfare and to increase the usefulness of the organization. She/he shall appoint all committees. She/he shall be a full voting member (voting in case of a tie) of any and all meetings and shall perform such other duties as are necessarily incidental to the office of President.

**VICE-PRESIDENT** -The Vice-President shall preside at all meetings of the organization in the absence of the President. She/he shall succeed the President if the President is unable to carry out the term of his office and shall assume such other duties as the President will assign.

**SECRETARY** -The Secretary shall record the minutes of all proceedings of the organization, including Board of Directors meetings, special meetings, and the annual meeting. The Secretary shall handle all correspondence of the organization, maintain membership records, and send monthly meeting notification.

**TREASURER**-The Treasurer shall have charge of all funds and current financial records of the organization. The Treasurer shall also: Make a written monthly financial report to the Board of Directors, as well as a year-end written financial report. Be bonded as deemed necessary by the organization's legal advisor. Maintain an accurate and up-to-date list of all equipment and assets of the organization. Pay all expenditures incurred as approved by the Board or previously approved budgets.

## **SECTION II**

### **ORGANIZING YOUR FESTIVAL**

The first responsibility and task of the new officers of your organization is to define areas of responsibility so that you are able to produce your festival with a minimum of problems and a maximum of prior planning.

You will need people to assume these areas of responsibilities. The first area of responsibility should be selecting a Personnel Chairman and organizing a volunteer recruitment campaign.

See details of volunteer recruitment in this section under the responsibilities of the *Personnel Chairman*.

#### **How to Form a Board of Directors**

The second step by the officers (normally referred to as the Executive Committee) is the formation of a working Board of Directors (B. O. D.) or

Board of Control. The membership of the Board of Directors should be those people who are willing to accept general responsibilities. They might be defined in your organizational structure as General Chairmen. (For the sake of clarity, we will use the term Board of Directors throughout this manual.)

A General Chairman has a broad area of responsibility, is a member of the Board of Directors, and is part of the year-round organization.

A Chairman has a limited, specific area of responsibility, and is not a member of the Board of Directors. He or she comes into the organization late in the planning to carry out a specific task.

By the Indiana Not-For-Profit Corporation Act of 1971 (more will be said about incorporating later in this manual), your Board of Directors can be the only officers, or there can be as many as you have areas of responsibility and people to fill the jobs.

Whether your event is large or small, a rules of operation (commonly called by-laws) must be generated by the Board of Directors.

### ***Creating By-Laws***

By-laws scare “the beggiebers” out of most non-legal volunteers, but there is no reason why your organization needs to hire a “Philadelphia Lawyer” to put down on paper how they intend to manage their festival. In short, by-laws should consist of a few short paragraphs outlining the following:

- I. The purpose of the group
- II. The membership of the group
- III. How the organization is governed
- IV. How officers are elected
- V. The duties of officers
- VI. How the organization would be dissolved
- VII. How the by-laws can be changed

A whole manual could be written on just this subject, but almost every community has people who are experienced in this area and a service club whose by-laws can be used as an example. Seek them out for advice.

The Indiana State Festivals Association will be glad to provide you sample copies of by-laws for the asking.

### ***Setting Priorities***

There are basic considerations that your Board of Directors should consider and solve prior to outlining the details of planning. They are the general *red tape of organizing*, the *general layout of your event*, and *contingency plan(s)*. Let’s take a look at each one.

#### **How to Handle the Red Tape**

Many chairmen have been seen in a ten story window preparing to jump after becoming bogged down in the red tape of permits and permissions, legal forms and insurance required to produce the festival.

That’s why it’s important to remember that most of this frustration comes from failing to plan ahead. Most, if not all, semi-legal forms such as parade permits and vendor licenses take time to secure.

#### ***a. Permits and Permissions***

One of the most often heard laments from chairmen is “I should have asked in advance.” Early in the planning stage, have a meeting with your organizational staff to determine what permission(s) are or could be required. Then, make a checklist of permits and permissions you need. Ask your local elected official(s)

in charge of licenses to help you determine what, if any, legal permits are needed.

Your law enforcement agency should be able to help you with parade permits and street closings. Your Clerk-Treasurer or Mayor's office should be able to advise you on vendor licenses (most communities waive the requirements for participants if asked in advance).

All private and most public property require the permission of the owners to use, cross, or limit normal access to and from. You should gain the permission of *all* property owners within a block of your site if in *any* way you are going to create abnormal noise, late night traffic, blockage of access or a chance of trespassing. Never gamble on universal goodwill, or you may have an injunction filed against you.

All you need is a simple, signed permit form stating that the property owner is aware of the activity and has no objections. (Note: Provide space at the bottom of the form for any restriction the property owner might have-being able to state "they will not block my drive" has often gained reluctant support.)

#### ***b. Legal Assistance***

There is NO substitute for getting a good attorney on your festival committee as legal advisor. Granted, he or she will often be the devil's advocate with your planning, but restrictions he may impose are preferable to the trouble he can keep you out of. Whether voluntary or paid, *legal counsel is a must.*

#### ***c. Incorporation***

One of the first steps in organizing your event is to be sure you have "Not-For-Profit Incorporation."

If your event is being sponsored by a non-profit organization, more than likely you will be included under their exemption. Again, your legal counsel can clarify this status.

Obtaining Not-For-Profit Incorporation in the State of Indiana is simple. A form, plus fee, is filed with the Secretary of State's office along with a copy of your by-laws. Any practicing attorney has the forms and can advise you on how to file them. Legislation in Indiana exempts the officers and members of Not-For-Profit corporations from liability suits. Here again, consultation with your legal advisor is a must before you proceed with your organization.

#### ***d. Insurance***

The foregoing might lead you to conclude that you do not need any type of liability insurance. (This is especially true with small or new festivals having a very limited treasury.) Many municipalities and businesses who grant you permission to use their property (i.e., city parks, school yards, streets, private parks, parking lots, etc.) will require that you provide them with a certificate of insurance that list them, as well as your organization, as additional insured's.

Liability insurance is expensive and hard to get. Sit down with your local insurance agent and work out the details early in your planning, before you receive one of the "No Coverage Available" letters when your plans are already underway.

If your local agent is not able to help you (many local home, auto, and casualty agents have had no experience in this type of coverage), contact the Indiana State Festivals Association for the name of local agencies who specialize in this kind of insurance.

One last word on insurance. Just as you might be asked to produce a certificate of insurance, you should require each and every contractor that you deal with (carnivals, food concessions, entertainers, etc.) to provide you with a certificate of insurance proving that he or she has adequate coverage listing your organization as an additional insured. You may also use this certificate to eliminate unreliable operators who tend to ruin special events.

### **How to Make a Tentative Layout**

Who and what goes where and how?

Start with the basic facts. How many people do you estimate will attend your festival? Use the Festival Guide to compare similar activities and communities. Write to them, or better still, visit them and ask how many they had attending. If their event was similar to yours, in a similar size community with a similar promotional program, you can take their attendance figures as a starting point.

Now draw a rough scale (1/4" = 1' works well) of the area you have selected for your activity. This drawing should include power sources, water sources, roads, trees, and all sidewalks. Walk the area looking for hazards and handicaps. (For example, you want to avoid leveling a concession trailer on the side of a hill.)

Now make a list of all of your anticipated support facilities and place them on your map (i.e., restrooms, information booth, headquarter, first aid, fire extinguishers, telephones, etc).

Next review your anticipated major attractions and place them on your map (i.e. stage(s), carnival, major displays).

Next make a listing of all the exhibitors that you can anticipate, add 25% for what you didn't anticipate and assign them numbers from the list. Place them on your map in the order of flow that you would like to have through the area.

If you have games in your event, classify them as exhibits for mapping with special considerations as to location. Do you want a game area? Do you want them mixed?

Now that your general layout is complete, take a look at the flow of your crowd through the area.

Start with *parking*. Go back to your anticipated attendance, divide by two (only two) to a car and calculate each car remaining in a parking place for 50% of the time of your festival (if an all day event). Now you know how many parking places to anticipate. If you don't find at least 80% of this figure available, return to step #1 of the layout selection and start over. *If they can't park, they won't come; if they do come and can't find a parking place, they will not be back!*

While you are looking at parking, don't forget to look closely at special parking for exhibitors and vendors. Many of them carry their wares in their trunks or trailers, and need close access. Food vendors must run in and out to get supplies and must have service routes. Your VIP's, media and emergency vehicles need access in and out as well as parking space.

Some general closing thoughts on space allotment. "Avoid crowding your space" is the rule of thumb, but don't spread out just because you have the room. People love crowds. That's part of the atmosphere of an event. When making your layout, it is better to expand than contract.

### ***Contingency Plans***

Remember Murphy’s first law of activity planning is “Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong before you are done.”

Now is the time to consider each of the possibilities. Have a detailed discussion with your Board of Directors to consider what *could* go wrong, and insist that all detail plans include contingency plans. Start your contingency planning session with these thoughts: What situation(s) would cause us to cancel this happening, and work back from that point. (You most likely will find that your Board of Directors will find few emergencies that will cause cancellation.)

Now is the time to set the tone for contingency planning. If you adopt the rule now before you start your detail planning, you will have it covered if the parade marshal gets sick or the main stage entertainment has a wreck on the way to your event.

***Organizing General Areas of Responsibility***

Your festival has a firm foundation on which to build. Now you need to get down to detail planning. There are five basic areas of detailed responsibility. They are *Finance, Promotion, Activities, Site Layout, and Personnel.*

These can be filled by newly recruited General Chairmen, or be included in areas of responsibility assumed by members of the Board of Directors. In most cases, the latter will be the case, unless you have an abundance of volunteers and an especially large festival.

Under each of these General Chairmen falls many areas of responsibility, each of which could be handled by a chairman, or all or any part assumed by the General Chairman. Each area *must* have a person clearly defined as responsible for organizing that specific area.

The detailed organizational chart might look something like this:

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

Chairman

(Executive Committee Member)

Vice-President \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer

Board of Directors

(General Chairmen)

|            |                  |               |                |                   |
|------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| A. Finance | B. Promotion     | C. Activities | D. Site Layout | E. Personnel      |
| Sponsors   | Publicity        | Entertainment | Parking        | Recruitment       |
| Seed Money | Media            | Vendors       | Utilities      | Recognition       |
| Budget     | Advertising      | Arts & Crafts | Restrooms      | Information Booth |
| Pricing    | Public Relations | Children      | Sound          |                   |
|            |                  | Games         | Stage          |                   |
|            |                  | Parade        | Security       |                   |
|            |                  | Queen         | First Aid      |                   |
|            |                  | Contests      | Decorations    |                   |
|            |                  | Carnival      | Communications |                   |
|            |                  | Exhibits      | Handicap       |                   |
|            |                  |               | Clean-Up       |                   |

*THERE IS NO HARD, CONCRETE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE* Each activity is different, and any manual must be constructed for the majority. Build your own organization, but be *sure* each of the charted areas is covered. The following should help you to understand the suggested structure.

### ***Details of Organizational Structure***

Enthusiasm is of the utmost importance. To get a festival started, your chairmen or officers should be absolutely sold on the activity itself. The most important public relations persons should be the chairmen and officers. Try to include all segments of the community, churches, civic organizations, lodges, etc. Make people know they are truly needed and their ideas are always welcome.

Probably the most important person in your organization, next to the Chairman is your Personnel General Chairman. Poor volunteer recruitment or failure to recruit sabotages more events than any other single item.

### **Personnel General Chairman**

Several ingredients are necessary in recruiting volunteers. Enthusiasm tops the list. Enthusiasm must be shown by everyone involved in your event to insure its success. Those people you ask to volunteer their time must feel enthusiasm to be motivated to devote a portion of their valuable time to the event. A strong belief in what you are doing, and a positive attitude toward achieving your goals are necessary in maintaining a high level of enthusiasm among volunteers.

Knowledge is also very important. People will more likely volunteer when they feel secure in the fact that the knowledge is there to guide them and answer their questions. No one wants to give their valuable time, even to a worthy cause, and then look foolish because they are uninformed. Specific details should be given to each volunteer concerning what is expected of him or her. It is necessary for the officers to know enough about these assignments and their time requirements to inform the potential volunteer, because an overworked volunteer won't be back to help next year.

The officers should get to know each volunteer well enough to determine if a volunteer feels over-loaded or unfamiliar with the procedure, and to provide assistance. Also volunteers who feel they're not accomplishing anything won't feel needed, and won't perform.

Dependability is important to volunteers. Volunteers must be able to depend on the officers when they need help or they'll lose interest. Let them know of any changes anticipated. Listen to their input. Do not take volunteers for granted, and don't assume every volunteer will want to help next year; officers should ask each volunteer if they would like to help again.

Concern for your volunteers is very important. Don't ask volunteers to do something you wouldn't do yourself. Know their capabilities and don't ask them to go beyond them. Volunteers who feel inadequate probably won't get the task done. If they do, it will fall short of what is needed and they'll lose their enthusiasm.

To find volunteers, start with your media. Prepare a broad-based press release stating that the festival needs volunteers to put on the show. Contact every service and social club, asking them for volunteers. Prepare volunteer applications and distribute them at all businesses and industries in your area.

Finally, don't forget retirees and the elderly. Nursing homes and retirement

communities, as well as all retirees' clubs are excellent sources of highly qualified, experienced personnel with the time to do the job.

When recruiting volunteers, try to obtain people who are qualified for a specific job. Don't order a volunteer to do something, ask. Never ask a person to do a job that you would not do, unless it's a job that needs an experienced person. Don't be demanding, and give credit where it's due.

### **Financial General Chairman**

#### ***a. Seed money***

If you have an established festival, you *must* set aside a certain sum at the end of each year as seed money for start-up expenses for the coming year. A good rule of thumb is to set aside 25% of your net profit *this* year as seed money for next year.

Where do you get the seed money for a new event? There are a number of ways a new activity may raise seed money up front, and these methods can also be used by established festivals which were not able to carry over enough capital.

Ask your sponsor(s) for an advance deposit (normally 1/3 of the total) as a sponsor commitment. (Sponsors will be discussed in detail in the next segment.) You may need to prepare a simple contract that details your performance because most businesses are well-acquainted with making a down payment against a performance contract. Go to your local financial institution and ask them for a short-term loan at a special interest rate. Most community-minded banks can make this arrangement rather quickly.

If you are having any ticketed events, print your tickets up front and have advance ticket sales. Plan a gala kick-off dinner well in advance of your festival, and charge a price that will produce seed money. Print special "Patron" buttons in advance and sell them to individuals for seed money.

If you have a parent organization, ask them for an advance from their treasury. Look into assistance and grants from your local and state governmental organizations. There's no limit to raising seed money. Use your imagination, and get out and beat the bushes.

#### ***b. Sponsors***

It is so much easier to host an event if you have a general sponsor. If you have a large industry or labor union in your area, present your plans to them and ask that they be the sponsor. For this kind of support (financial and personnel) be flexible with your festival name, theme, location, changes, etc., to satisfy the sponsor. There are at least two major festivals in Indiana whose corporate sponsors provide management personnel to work full time on production for 30 to 90 days prior to the event.

In case you are unable to obtain a general sponsor, ask for individual activity sponsors. Ask the Activity Chairman for a complete list of planned activities, then present this printed list to potential sponsors (grocers, radio and TV stations, shopping centers, small industries, etc.)

Last, but by no means least, go back to your potential list with an offer of co-sponsorship. Try to package companion industries or businesses together. When you secure one sponsor, use that as a leverage to get another sponsor.

The business of sponsors is tough, but the basic axiom is, "*If you don't ask, you won't get!*" We realize sponsors are approached by every activity in your community. That is why it is essential you do *all* your advance planning and

present the potential sponsor with a package that shows him the net result of his community involvement, exposure, and publicity.

Remember, most of your potential sponsors have annual budgets for community relations. So start early. Many small and large businesses forecast community donations in their fiscal budgets. If you let them know in advance, they can't say no because it isn't budgeted. It is your job to convince them that "your wheel squeaks the loudest."

### ***c. Budget***

Every area or chairman should produce a forecasted budget of expense and income. Don't worry, if this forecasted budget is estimation. That is all any budget is supposed to be. True, if you have handled a given task before, or if you have the detailed information, your estimate may be fairly accurate. But it is still a guess based on your planning for your activity, and this could be drastically different from past experience.

That is not to say that your guess should not be based on research. It *must* be based on research. How much will the chicken, trimmings, drinks, tables, tents, help, clean-up, etc., of our chicken barbecue cost? How much will we sell it for? What is our anticipated attendance? What is our shrinkage? What is our profit?

Each chairman and committee should have the flexibility to operate within the guidelines of their approved budget. It should be general operating procedure that *no* additional expenditures above the approved budget can be made without total concurrence of the Board.

If individuals have multiple areas of responsibility assignments, then they should include them in one budget. After receiving all the individual area budgets, the Board of Directors should prepare a master budget. This is the time to review each budget request individually. If your Decorations Chairman plans to spend \$50,000 on decorations and your total anticipated income is \$5,000, some changes must be made. Either the chairman must raise his income (through sponsors, donations, etc.) or cut back on his plans.

(A word of caution: Chairmen tend to be protective of their area, and budget planning is to some degree a priority-setting exercise. Prior to this meeting, the chairman should get the Board of Directors' concurrence, so that the final budget is for the good of the event as a whole.)

### ***d. Pricing***

Whether you make a profit, incur a loss, or come out even depends upon the pricing policy of your festival.

Making a profit on your event is not wrong. Both the state and federal regulations regarding Not-For-Profit corporations allow for making a profit by this type of corporation as long as such profit is dedicated to the purpose for which the corporation was formed.

There is at least one festival in the state which has made enough in annual profits to purchase a number of floats, rolling stock, people movers, and a building for an office and storage.

Since we are going to discuss making money openly, how do we best guarantee achieving this goal?

First, be prepared to sell your space! Space at your festival is a valuable commodity. Establish a reasonable price per frontage foot and hold to it. Again, your prior sister festival research should give you some idea of pricing.

When pricing booth space, establish right away any differential you want

to make between local, non-profit vendors and commercial suppliers. Nothing will cause trouble faster than selling the same space for two or more prices. If you choose to vary your price per frontage foot between local, non-profit, commercial, food, arts and crafts, do not try to hide it. Print it out on your vendor application and stick to it.

When pricing booth space, first consider whether your rental is on a straight charge basis, a charge plus commission, or a percentage of sales only. (A word of caution: Percentage sales require follow-up and checking. Vendors can leave town without paying you, and even the best local service club chairman has been known to make a mistake when it comes to computing profit.)

When you state your “per frontage foot space charge,” state clearly that this is for space only. Electric hook-up, water supply, and trash removal are, or can be extra charges.

Other money-making activities are contests. Entry fees for contestants are in order! If you calculate your expenses and add 20%, then divide by the number of contestants, your entry fee will be on a break-even basis. Entry fees for special activities don’t drive contestants away, but instead could keep out those who might cause trouble.

Types of special events that can generate income through entry fees are:

Runs-Skill Contests (casting, horseshoe pitching)

Eating Contests (pies, watermelon, spaghetti)

Kids’ Events (greased pig, pole climb, fish pond)

Talent (Queen, hogcall, best legs)

This list could fill the rest of the manual and again is limited only by your imagination and the scope of your festival. The Indiana State Festivals Association can supply you with help for more detailed listings of possible entry fee events.

Home tours are an ever-popular money-making activity in many festivals. Package tours that include more than one home are easily sold with advance tickets and have almost universal appeal to all ages. Hardly anyone can resist the urge to “nose in another’s closet.”

When recruiting homes for tours, suggest that homeowners have a candlelight tour, especially if they express concern about the appearance of the furnishings. Also, don’t miss a garage tour to see an old car being restored, or a home shop tour for the cottage craftsman who is proud of his (her) work.

Another excellent source of festival income is commemorative items. If you have a strong historical or local interest theme, you can produce and sell all types of printed apparel (T-shirts, hats, sunvisors, etc.) with your logo and event dates on them. Commemorative programs are another good source of income. You can sell your program even if it includes advertising.

Replicas of your historical theme are another good seller. One festival made a mint with replica suckers of their theme items.

If you have any extra volunteers, consider running your own concession booth. Why not profit from your committee’s work? Good down-home cooking (ham and beans, roasted ears of corn, and pink lemonade) is easy to prepare and a reliable source of income.

Some other sources of income you may consider are special parking fees, entry fees to special shows and plays, and reserved seating for your parade or special events.

### *e. Memberships*

Before we conclude money-making, let's look at the best source of income for your event: Membership In Your Organization.

If you have sold your event to your community, then you can easily sell patron memberships, with special privileges such as reserved parade seats, home tour tickets, and discounts on commemorative items.

Patron memberships not only bring in advance revenue, but also involve more people directly in the event—some of whom may be committee members next year.

### **Promotion General Chairman**

#### *a. Publicity*

GET THE WORD OUT. GET AS MUCH INFORMATION TO AS MANY PEOPLE, FROM AS MANY PLACES, AS POSSIBLE. THIS IS WHAT IS HAPPENING AT OUR FESTIVAL!!

How? Publicity. Even the smallest event needs a Publicity Chairman! From day one in your planning stage to the wrap-up, your Publicity Chairman should be aware of all details. Each major decision about your festival should be related to the media to keep your activities foremost in the minds of your prospective spectators.

#### **MEDIA PEOPLE MUST BE “STROKED”!**

It is your responsibility to see that all media think you are a wonderful person, doing everything in your power to make their jobs easier. Meet at their convenience—breakfast or lunch. Any press party that places your activity first in their minds gets you better coverage in newspapers, radio, and television.

#### *b. Advertising*

Paid advertising includes everything from a small ad in the classified section of the village weekly to billboards on the interstate, to television commercials on the national networks. Brochures can range from flyers in your local bank to thousands of professionally printed, four-color brochures.

#### *c. Public Relations*

These two impressive words can be defined as making everyone from the Mayor to the newsboy on the corner feel so important that they talk about your festival and tell other people. It works! Always take care of your local people first. (Ed. Note: We will cover Final Layout and Activities Chairmen in our organizational chart, and will discuss both of these responsibilities in Section III under Producing the Festival.)

#### *d. Dealing with the VIP*

We are sure that anyone reading this manual is aware that VIP means Very Important Person, but a number of event chairmen swear that VIP means Very Impatient Person. The handling of VIP's should not be delegated to committees. The VIP at your event should be considered your President's Special Guest.

The VIP who owns the title deserves the treatment. When the Mayor comes to your festival, you must stop papering the walls with one hand and extend that hand in hospitality while you delegate the paper hanging to someone else. In dealing with a VIP, a good old-fashioned “ounce of prevention” is worth a “pound of cure.”

Generally, VIPs will not appear at your festival unannounced. You have either invited him or he has invited himself. In either case, take the time to keep up with his schedule during his stay, and plan in advance how you will handle each

situation.

Don't make the mistake of one Parade Chairman who left the bald-headed Mayor sitting in the hot sun in an open convertible for 45 minutes, waiting for the parade to start!

#### *e. The Internet*

No single technology innovation since the television has impacted our world like the internet. With a minimal investment, you and your event can literally hold the world in your hands; and by using the internet to your advantage, you can virtually bring the whole world to your event.

Building your own website can be easy for do-it-yourselfers with a minimum of investment or knowledge. More complicated websites can be created with online tools available at a small cost, or website designers can create a fully-functional, state-of-the-art website for your event, depending on your budget.

Not only can you use e-mail to update your festival committee, you can also create a mailing list of attendees at your event for future notifications. Many festival also use e-mail to contact their vendors, contest participants, sponsors, entertainers, etc. Snail-mail has been replaced.

The rise of the internet has also given birth a new phenomenon known as Social Media. Not only is it (mostly) free, you can control your own content, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and a thousand other resources are out there waiting to reach out to your potential customers.

Because the younger generation is so much in tune with the internet and social media, this offers a perfect chance for you to involve younger volunteers in the staging of your event. If they can find their "niche" to fit in as a festival organizer, they will embrace the event as their own. Managing your internet presence, including Social Media, can be a time-consuming job, but one that the younger members of your community are likely to enjoy.

## **SECTION III**

### **PRODUCING YOUR FESTIVAL**

Although much of your organizing will occur in the early stages, we will now look at the physical layout of your plan and the detailed production responsibilities. There are three areas of responsibility that should be the responsibility of your officers to organize and carry out. They are: Ceremonies, Awards, and Detailed Time Table.

#### **Ceremonies**

Some festivals have opening and closing ceremonies. To generate enthusiasm about these, be well-prepared in advance and check on all participants right up to the appointed time. Keep the number of people involved at a minimum for better coordination. One of the most popular ceremonies is playing the national anthem with presentation of the flag, involving service organizations such as American Legions and Auxiliaries, VFWs, Boy and Girl Scouts.

Your opening ceremony can be a kick-off breakfast or brunch. You can sell tickets, and get a proclamation read by the Mayor. Your opening can involve no more than one aerial bomb with sounding of the local sirens and church bells. Whatever your plans, large or small, do have some type of opening ceremony.

Whether you have a closing or not is up to you and your community. Don't expect much enthusiasm and attendance; your committee will be exhausted and the public will be focused on the next event in your community. It's far better

to plan a good wrap-up session, which we will discuss in Section IV of this manual.

### **Awards**

Awards can get out of hand and, therefore, should be considered carefully by the Board of Directors. (CAUTION: Many events have gone broke paying for awards to every single person who participated in *any* phase of the activity.) Another reason for the Board of Directors to consider all awards is continuity. Certificates of Participation can be standardized for the event and lettered individually for each activity.

Awards can include participation ribbons for a parade, or trophies for parades, various contests, and activities. Awards need not be expensive. They may be purchased or handmade. In some cases, a handmade award will be appreciated more than an expensive award. Free refreshments may be given as an appreciation award, especially at the end of a parade.

### **Detailed Time Table**

A detailed time table of your festival is a *must*. It is the one item that you construct backwards. Start with the time the activity is happening. Write down the ending times. Write down the time to clean-up. Write down the time for the next activity in the same area. Write down the starting time of the event. Write down the prior event in this area.

Now consider and list in order: Time to decorate. Time to set up-move-rake-mow-clean, etc. Refer to your layout map. Is everything in place? How much time for each to set up? Time of each activity during your festival-preparation-happening-clean-up. Time for start of each activity.

When you have computed your detailed time table for the day(s) of your festival you are half done. The easy half, we might add. Now back up at least a year from that date and layout a calendar month-by-month.

Plan and enter in your time table at least one Board of Directors meeting every month for the first nine (9) months. Then plan two a month for the tenth and eleventh months, and one each week during the month preceding your festival. Enter on your calendar the start and deadline for such items as: Promotional Brochures, Billboard Advertising, Radio Commercials, Press Releases, etc.

A typical time table for a July Festival might look something like this (time table edited due to space):

August- Set date for following year

September- Review organizational structure; elect President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer

October- Set priorities of activities; Prepare budget; Appoint chairmen of activities which require advance registration

November- Update all applications and response cards

December- Break for the holidays

January- Start looking for major sponsors, if needed (new year budgets are being prepared; and the promotional dollars are available); Time to contact bands and corporate floats; Time to contact entertainers, concessions, arts and crafts (they will be looking at their summer schedules); Send out first round of applications now!

February- Committee general chairmen should start looking for prospective chairmen and set up the structure for their areas (how many volunteers needed,

etc.)

March- Design of billboards completed; Recruitment complete; Committees formed; Rough layout map done

April- Review first activity plans

May- Finalize promotional brochure (broad promotion only); Review activity plans

June 1- Billboards go up; June 7- Finalize activity plans; June 14- Finalize layout; June 30- Decorate.

Now, after pages and hours of planning and preparation, the Big Day of your festival arrives when the General Chairmen in charge of activities and layout can sit back and watch it all come together.

That is, they can *IF* they planned well and have excellent personnel to carry out the tasks. Let's start with activities and see how we got to the big day.

### **Activities General Chairman**

Most, if not all, of your planning could be placed under general activities. However, we have found that lumping the following categories together will produce the most harmonious relationships in your activity:

#### **a. Food and Beverage Booths**

There are two basic types of food and beverages. They are theme food and general concessions. Most theme foods (i .e., ham and beans, barbeque, watermelon) are handled by local groups and should be considered first for your food vendor space. Most traveling concessionaires handle a rather general line so that they have broad appeal and availability of supplies.

That is not to say that you should eliminate any professional concession stands from your festival. Most professional concession stands look far better than anything a local group can assemble, and they are far more adept at handling the volume requirements of a crowd. Most festivals achieve an even distribution of professionals and amateurs among their food vendors, allotting the specialty items to local groups and letting the professionals handle the hot dogs and hamburgers.

As you start placing your food vendors on your layout map, you will have to decide whether to centralize or scatter your food booths,. There is no hard and fast rule about placement of food. Generally, it is determined by the type of festival layout, and/or desire of the chairman. Alcoholic beverages at your event can be a touchy problem. Before you even consider the subject, review community feelings on the subject. If you feel that serving alcoholic beverages is needed (you could hardly have an Oktoberfest without a beer booth) or that the income from this type of concession is essential to your event (one festival clears over \$10,000 on their beer tent in one week) then read on.

Today, the liability of serving alcoholic beverages is so great that special insurance coverage is a *must*. This type of coverage is extremely expensive, if you can find the coverage at all. Therefore, most event planners find it much more expedient to contract out the sale of alcoholic beverages to a private company that has both the license and the insurance. Many catering companies carry this type of coverage and are aware of all the Alcoholic Beverage Commission rules governing the sale of intoxicating beverage.

If you do contract for an alcoholic beverage booth, you must do four things:

See their liquor license ;See their “Off Premises” Permit; Receive from them a copy of an insurance liability form that is proof of their being insured; Have a written, signed contract with them that makes it clear that you are only leasing them space and are in no way responsible for any liability

Speaking of contracts, a signed contract with each vendor is essential. Your contract need not be in legal terms, but it should state the fees (either flat fee or percentage, as discussed under financing), hours of operation, what you will provide, what are any extra charges, and how much for each (power, water, trash removal).

If you have planned well, and sent out your advanced publicity, about this time food concessionaires will be coming to you. How many are enough? Should you limit the number? Should you give exclusives to any special group? All of these questions must be resolved in advance of your festival with no exceptions. (Caution: Nothing will get you in more trouble than turning down one vendor in favor of another without valid reason.)

How many vendors? Enough that everyone can be served in a reasonable time-and few enough that each makes money. Simple enough, but it again illustrates the necessity for your prior planning as outlined in Section I. Be sure to obtain a copy of your local health rules governing concessions. For example, in most areas the rules require that all unwrapped food stuffs *must* be dispensed from covered and enclosed facilities. Nothing can wreck your festival like the local health inspector shutting down a food vendor. The news will spread fast and affect your whole event. Here is another example of the professional vendor having preference over the local group. Professional vendors know these rules and follow them closely. Local groups may have little or no knowledge of health rules and must be educated.

A good policy to establish with food vendors is a year-to-year priority for those who work out well. At the conclusion of this year’s event, extend an invitation to preferred vendors to participate next year. Make sure you have their names and addresses for mailing out advance contracts next year. Better still, sign them up before they leave. When you contact your vendors during your event, give them a short survey form to fill out. Don’t ask them how much they cleared, but do ask their general impressions of your festival. Most of the professionals cover hundreds of festivals each year and can give you a good evaluation of your activity.

Finally, what do you do about no-shows and rain outs? Your prior signed contract *must* state in clear, emphatic terms what your policy is. Each year you will have a major illness, a truck breakdown, or some other reason why a concessionaire who has paid his fee wants his money back. The policy is up to you, but it must be determined in advance and adhered to by everyone.

#### **b. Carnivals**

Do we have a carnival as part of our festival? Much has been said about carnivals and amusement ride people.

As a whole, amusement ride companies are just like any other business; there are good, honest, reputable dealers and there are those who aren’t. There is probably no other business in which a few unprofessional people have spoiled it for the rest. Selecting a good carnival for your event is as simple as hiring an employee for your business. Ask for and investigate references. If you are considering a carnival, talk it over with other festival chairmen in your area.

Whom do they recommend? Ask the carnival for references from last year.

Look for a carnival that is based in or is traveling in your area. Travel time is money to a carnival, and the less travel involved the better deal they are willing to make. When booking a carnival, demand a complete list of all rides, games, concessions, and shows they intend to bring. Most ride carnivals carry with them a certain number of support concessions and activities. If you have not allowed for these activities on your master plan, they could easily upset your balance of food booths.

In most cases you will receive a percentage of each day's ticket sales, in addition to a flat rate per game or food booth.

Obtain a written contract. It might be your responsibility to pay for all vendor permits, if the city does not waive these during your festival. It also might be against the contract for your organization to book professional games and food booths. You might have to provide electricity for a portion of the show. And, it might be your responsibility to provide all ticket booth workers. However, this is all negotiable.

If you have any doubts about the activity of a certain carnival under consideration, by all means get his schedule and visit his show. (Caution: A sure tip for possible trouble is a carnival that will not give you its itinerary for this year.)

Carnivals are a great draw for any festival. They add color and pizzazz, and are a sure means of income. Most carnivals will work out some type of split-profit deal with you that will eliminate major financial risks. If your festival is new, you can expect the carnival representatives to want some guarantee that you will have a successful event before they make a dollar commitment. Here again, prior planning and survey is to your advantage. The carnival owner is a professional and can quickly recognize the earmarks of a successful festival.

### **c. Arts and Crafts**

Any festival is greatly enhanced by having a nice arts and crafts display. Many people cannot resist buying handmade items. This also is an area where the committee should plan early. Skilled artists/craftsmen are in great demand, and many artists make their schedule a year in advance. Also, if you are new to the arts and crafts committee, do look for variety. Five basket-weavers and no candle-makers or woodcarvers do not add variety to your section of the festival.

If you have a small area or want to be very specific, consider a **Juried Arts and Crafts Section**. The craftsmen send in samples or photographs of their work, and the jury or judging committee makes the selection of who may enter. Restrictions such as quantity, sizes and media, should be decided in your early planning. Giving awards or recognition is one way of attracting the better artists, but make certain the judging is done by a qualified person. Profit from a juried art and craft show can be derived by admission fee to the area, space rental for the artist to display and sell, and/or a percentage of gross sales (usually 10 to 20%).

### **Non-Juried Arts & Crafts (Commercial Crafts)**

Crafts that are not juried can still attract quite a large number of visitors and buyers. The main consideration is to group your crafts according to categories. Highly skilled artistic craftsmen and artists prefer to be grouped together. The commercial crafts, business displays, and the person who buys kits and then finishes the craft for sale, group very well together.

### **Flea Markets (Antique Shows)**

Everyone loves a flea market. Booth spaces are generally set in a very close area with very little extra space. Flea markets sell everything, from antiques to collectibles, to just “stuff. “There is very little that cannot be sold in a flea market.” The adage is true: your junk may be someone else’s treasure.

Antique shows and displays require more space. Generally, antique displayers prefer a building or tent because antique furniture can be damaged by sun, wind, or rain. This is a big draw at any festival, if you have the facilities to rent the space.

As do other types of events, arts, crafts, business displays, flea markets and antique shows may require electricity, water, trash receptacles, and a degree of security. If possible, each type of exhibit group should have an individual chairman in charge of laying out the space, mailing applications and receiving applications. (A postcard with the set-up time and exact location is perfect to mail as acceptance to exhibitors if you are having a street festival. This card can serve as their pass onto the street as well as their placement when they get there.)

Another helpful suggestion is to charge the same price for space in the arts, crafts, and display areas as in the flea market area. Then you have no problems with someone wanting to set up in the least expensive spot. Some organizations have different prices for booth rental for commercial or not-for-profit organizations. That is the choice of the organization; however, discuss this carefully. It is amazing how many not-for-profit organizations there are. Don’t let only the vendors and exhibitors make a profit. Make a little yourself for seed money and to pay for the expenses of your organization.

Do not be afraid to say NO if you do *not* think an exhibitor fits your festival. Print on all applications. “All applications will be screened by the committee.” That covers everything.

#### **d. Exhibits**

Early in your planning, the Executive Committee or Board of Directors must establish firm ground rules about exhibit space. Most of this space will be for companies that want to sell or advertise through your event.

Do you want business exhibits in your festival? Do you want to limit business exhibits to local merchants only? Are there any types of business exhibits that you do not want in your event? (Caution: Pornography comes in a lot of disguises: ‘T-shirt booths, knick-knack shops, exercise equipment.) Business booth space exhibits can make you money, so the choice must be yours-in *advance*.

What will your policy be for not-for-profit exhibits? How will you verify their status? What limits will you place on their participation? Once you have established the ground rules for exhibit space in your event, *stick with them!*

Establish the size of exhibit area and the price you are charging. Your price need not be the same as you charge food concessions and arts and crafts, but it should follow the same formula. That is, the extra charge for power, water and trash pickup should be the same, and the charge for all exhibitors must be consistent.

#### **e. Entertainment**

Entertainment is the “freebie” of your event, or the event in itself. In either case, the rules are much the same.

In booking entertainment for any festival, provide the type that will please the most people of your area. Make a comprehensive study of the price range you can cope with. Booking big name entertainment is a big risk, unless you can be reasonably assured that you can afford it. Try to provide entertainment for at least three special groups-kids, teens, and elderly. Contact local talent if possible. They will usually do the best they can because they are entertaining their friends and neighbors. Make sure that entertainment is provided during the peak hours of your festival. If at all possible, have something going on at all times, and in different locations. If all entertainment is located in one spot, the crowd will not be inclined to visit other areas.

Stop and think about the big entertainment areas of the country. Can you see all the entertainment at the same time? There is nothing wrong with a person leaving your festival complaining that there was so much going on in so many places, he could not see it all. You can and should plan your entertainment to move your crowd throughout your festival area.

#### **f. Parades**

To plan a parade, there are several important issues to consider. For instance, sending applications, sending confirmation notices with pertinent data such as location map, rules, and time. By all means use the local, county, or state law enforcement officers. Select a parade marshal and a grand marshal, and try to use a local dignitary for parade marshal and a celebrity for the grand marshal. Parade forms should be sent out well in advance of the parade. City planners and state agencies should be contacted in regard to time and routes to be taken. Schools should be contacted for band participation. Don't forget your local fire departments, legions, scouts, churches and business people. Try to allow each parade category with some sort of award, depending on your finances. One of the most important ways to present your appreciation to participants is to give them an inexpensive participant ribbon, or a cold beverage. (Here is a good opportunity to contact the nearest cola bottler for help.)

By all means, start your parade on time and keep the horses to the rear!

One of the most often asked questions about parades is how do I get participants? A rather simple, fun and profitable way of getting participants in your parade is through reciprocal parade agreements. Develop a parade unit for your festival around your theme (it can be as elaborate as a float, and as simple as a golf cart) and offer it as an entry in other parades, provided they reciprocate and send a unit to your parade. One festival in Indiana has built their parade from 12 units to 54 units by utilizing this method and having fun at the same time.

#### **g. Contests**

Contests must be selected according to the type of event you are sponsoring. If your festival is family oriented, be sure to have contests that will include all ages. Contests can consume too much time, so be sure that the audience does not get bored and walk away. Try to make some kind of an award for every contest and keep an eye open for any signs of participation that may be harmful to contestant or audience.

#### **h. Queen Pageant**

If you elect to have a Queen of your event, you should decide early on whether this queen is to be selected by pageant procedure or by popularity contest. Voting by money in jars, mail-in ballots, or calls to the media are

popularity contests and have the distinct disadvantage of being able to be bought. Although this method may be a fund raiser, sooner or later it will do your event more harm than good.

If you choose to use the pageant method for queen selection, then read on, for here are the basic rules.

First, determine if your queen is to move on to any other level of participation (i.e., Miss Indiana, Junior Miss, Miss America, Indiana State Festivals Association Scholarship Pageant, etc.). If so, get a copy of that organization's rules and follow them to the letter. If not, it will still simplify your planning to follow some established rules in the conduct of your contest.

In planning your queen contest, work backwards from the date of crowning. Will she be crowned before, during, or after the event? Do you want this activity held indoors or out? Who do you want to participate? Male? All female? Any age restrictions? Any geographic requirements? How many participants can you handle?

Now you have the basic planning of who, where, what, and when. Start looking in detail at HOW!

Judges, their ability and qualifications, are the making of a successful show. If at all possible see that they are non-local people (An expert is a person ten miles away from home.) Here again is a chance to set up reciprocal trades with other festivals and events having queens through the Indiana State Festivals Association. You should always have an odd number of judges, and if at all possible, they should be a conglomerate mix of professions, sex and race. One person on your committee should be assigned to assist the judges as their host and tabulator. Remember to apply all VIP rules to your visiting judges.

Next in importance is your Master of Ceremonies (MC). This person *must* have a strong stage presence, and if at all possible should be a local dignitary. Most disc jockeys make good Masters of Ceremonies, as well as directors of community organizations such as Convention Bureaus or Chambers of Commerce.

Most of your program plans for queen events will call for some type of escorts for the contestants during the contest. Escorts should all be selected from the same local organization, if possible, and coached so that they do not distract from the contestant.

The music for your show can be recorded or live. Both have merit, but in most cases, you can do better with canned music on a good sound system than you can do with live musicians, unless you have the time, talent, and finances for a lot of rehearsal time.

In producing your queen contest, many little details go together to complete your show: decoration of stage; dress of the contestants (it helps to give them something to hold in their hands); gifts to contestants, judges, musicians; Master of Ceremonies; adequate dressing rooms for contestants (good light-plenty of mirrors); instructors for contestants (make-up, poise, questions, stage presence); sashes for contestants (shoulder or wrap around); sponsors for either the event or individual contestants; as well as many other details. If you are planning to have a queen contest and need help and advice, contact the Indiana State Festivals Association for assistance.

Queen contests can be fun, attractive money-makers, or they can be a lot of work and trouble. It is one area where consulting with experience is a must.

## **i. Children's Activities**

Most festivals and events are family oriented. We know one festival chairman who has a big poster above her desk that reads, "A festival is for the whole family, and a family includes the kids of all ages 8 to 80." Planning activities that are for, or include, children is as important as a group of special activities, and is important also as a part of your general, overall planning for each activity. From your opening ceremonies, that might include some costumed character playing to the kids, through all your areas: awards for children, food that kids like, kiddie rides at the carnival (a must), craft booths with toys, and especially entertainment geared to children. Keeping the "8 to 80" kids in mind, ask your chairmen what's in their program for the kids?

Before we leave children's activities at your festival, let's take a hard look at the teenage set. They are part of the family; they have money to spend; they attend events! What have you planned just for them? As distasteful, and sometimes disruptive, as a rock concert can be, it has a solid sell. There is always, in and about, local talent seeking a means to showcase that talent. It could be secured free or for nominal fees for a "Battle of the Bands."

### **Layout General Chairman**

As you recall from Section II, there are eleven basic areas of concern falling under the broad general area of layout. Some, if not all, of these areas cross *over* into other chairmen's sections. Most certainly this area of responsibility requires a person who can work with people. Many of the physical plant details will be worked out by the chairman of the activity (i.e., the Entertainment Chairman may secure the stage requirements for the entertainment). That is the best way to get the job done correctly, but much of the physical layout of the event will require detailed coordination and must have a chairman to take the general responsibility as follows:

#### **a. Parking and Traffic Control**

Recruit a local law enforcement official on a temporary basis to sit down with you and look at your layout map. Give him your estimated attendance and list of cars that will require parking area from your prior planning. Give him your operating hours. Give him your detailed program (special high attendance features: opening, queen contest, concerts, etc.) and ask his opinion.

On an area map route your anticipated traffic flow to and from the activity. Identify the hot spots in the traffic pattern and ask his recommendations to help eliminate, re-route, or control them. (Caution: If your traffic flow involves the potential blockage or congestion of a state highway, be sure to consult with your nearest State Police post in advance.)

After you have selected your parking lots and defined your traffic flow, move to the control of the parking lot itself. A good rule of thumb is that any parking lot not lined must be manned or you will have traffic jams. You can man parking areas with Explorer Scouts. Police Athletic League. Civil Air Patrols, or YMCA senior kids. Again prior planning is the key! Make a map of the lot. Go over where, and in what order, each vehicle is placed, in and out. Show team positions on map and have a responsible adult (you or group leader) in charge at all times.

Now consider any and all the exceptions to the rules: VIPs, Committee, Patrons, Media, Exhibitors. etc. Design some type of special pass of each (good business and it flatters each of them). Place a sample of each pass (they can be

simply cards that are color-coded with your event logo stamped on front) on display boards with a description of the rights and privileges of each. Distribute these display boards to all of your security people and parking committee.

#### **b. Utilities**

Your Utility Chairman must be extremely knowledgeable in electricity. Special events are notorious for high amperage usage.

Your Utility Chairman must also be concerned with such other utility needs as water, and in some instances the availability of bottled gas, but by far the primary problem for your festival will be power.

First, what are your local regulations concerning temporary power? At least two months prior to your event, your chairman should contact your local power source and discuss the potential need with the proper authority. Most power companies have engineers who have experience with temporary power. Take your area layout map with you and pin-point the need for power. If you are having a carnival, find out now if they have their own power source (portable generators) or are planning to hook up to your power. Indicate on your map each power source and the potential pull (number of extensions) for each. Find out how and how much additional power drops will cost and if you find they are needed, get your order in now: two (2) months in advance.

#### **c. Restrooms**

Probably nothing in your event will have a more lasting memory with the general public than a lack of restrooms. Have you ever been in a strange place and could not find a restroom for you or your family? Need we say more? The restrooms must be accessible and convenient, but must also maintain a discreet distance from the mainstream of activities.

Signage locating the restroom is a must? Your signs should be in the most prominent locations possible. Plan to take one last look at your restroom signs before you open. Signs placed in advance can disappear in the signage of concession and other activities during your event.

If you use portable restrooms, check out the company, bargain with them on the price and stipulate *clearly* in the contract when and how they are to be cleaned.

#### **d. Sound and Stages**

If you are fortunate enough to have a permanent stage in your area, by all means utilize it, but just because it is there does not mean all activities must be centered on the central stage. If your Entertainment Chairman wants to diversify the activities and needs another stage, don't panic or get elaborate. A flatbed truck with steps made to reach the area works fine as a temporary, portable stage. It can be any size from a single axle to a semi, depending on your need.

A part of your stage set-up is seating. Shall we seat or let them stand? Over 30 minutes of a standing show will loose your crowd. Many rental companies can supply portable chairs, or you may borrow them from churches, boys clubs, unions, etc., or even improvise with planking and cement blocks.

The best show is a flop if you can't hear it. Money spent for a good, professional sound system is money well spent. There is a vast difference between indoor and outdoor sound systems and normally the two do not interchange. (Caution: The sound you hear with no crowd present is not the sound they will hear when they fill your activity.)

#### **e. First Aid**

Plan now for an emergency! An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It may also save you money on insurance rates. You will be required to draw up an emergency operation plan and submit it to the State Fire Marshal's Office in order to obtain your Amusement Permit. This plan will need to include detailed maps of your festival grounds. Form a one-time special committee to include public safety people from your hospitals, law enforcement, fire and health agencies. Ask them to go over your plans and layouts, looking for potential trouble areas.

Recruit your emergency personnel and provide them a centralized, well-publicized area that is well-supplied with the materials they need. Above all else, provide the means of communication with these people so that they might respond to an emergency situation in the minimum of time. Have emergency vehicles standing by and staffed at all times from the start of set-up to the last person leaving the area. Notify your nearest hospital of your festival and that you will be bringing patients to their facility in the event of an emergency.

One last word in the event of an emergency. Be sure all of your committees are prepared to take notes, statements, addresses of witnesses, etc. in an emergency. You might even do a bit of playacting at one of your meetings. Facts and records are essential in the event of an emergency. (Caution: The person who is injured and refuses first aid treatment is a potential problem. Be sure that you have witnesses to document this fact in writing.)

#### **f. Security**

Security deals with basically two areas: people and property. The "people" area involves emergencies and violation of the laws and/or accepted rules. The "property" area is the protection against damage and theft.

To handle both areas requires a special type of trained person who is well-informed and in communication with the necessary authorities at all times. We will discuss communication needs under Section #9, so we will concentrate now on type of persons for the job and their responsibilities.

Of course, the ideal security personnel are local uniformed law enforcement agencies. Use them if at all possible! They are known! They are trained! They have the authority! But, what if there are none available? Try off-duty volunteers first; try off-duty paid, second; auxiliary units of law enforcement agencies, third; private security forces, fourth; and other uniformed adult units last.

Be sure they are informed and have copies of your emergency operation plan and printed maps of all locations (i.e., first aid stations, event offices, information centers, restrooms). By the very nature of their presence, they will be asked any and all kinds of questions. They must have or know how to find the answers.

Property protection during your festival could be the major responsibility of your security force. Many events are out-of-doors in unsecured areas and require around the clock security.

When organizing your security force, consider the following factors:

1. Do we have a central shelter or office for the force to work out of?
2. Does our security force have accessibility to all areas of the event at all times?
3. Does our security have the authority to handle all situations?
4. Do we provide information about security and its availability to all who need to know (i.e., providing guard for people making night bank deposits)?

5. Finally, your security must be aware that they are not only responsible for your festival, the people, the crowd control, the property, but also responsible for the area that your event affects. Local residents and businesses that are affected by the activity will turn to your security for help or complaint.

They must be prepared to respond to these situations, to soothe the troubled waters and communicate with your committee any problems.

**BASIC EMERGENCY PROCEDURE**-In the event of any major emergency on the grounds of your festival, all personnel must know and rehearse that procedure. A sound method of communication is essential in an emergency. Walkie-talkie radios are a **MUST** for large area, outdoor or indoor activities.

The following basic rules of advance planning are to (1) inform the officers at once, (2) monitor radios for instructions, (3) inform your local security and emergency personnel, (4) have means for crowd control planned, and (5) control the press and pictures as best you can.

#### **g. Clean-up**

One of the most important impressions that people see at any festival is the cleanliness of the surroundings. First of all, ascertain the need for areas that are prone to the most litter. Barrels or appropriate containers should be placed in areas where most trash is apt to be found. Provide waterproof containers if located outdoors, and cardboard or boxes inside where they won't be ruined by rain or wet waste. Boys clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, etc., can be used to pick up trash, and plastic bags can be furnished to keep debris contained. Hauling trash away can be handled by your city, town, or private contractor. The more often trash is picked up during the event, the easier it is at the end of the festival.

#### **h. Decorations**

Decorating is obviously a necessary expense item which must be planned in your budget and covered by other income-producing activities. Decorations is the one area that must start with an established budget. A creative Decorations Chairman can deplete your funds in a hurry. Be fair to your person in charge of decorations. Tell him up front how much he can spend. Decorations need not be elaborate. They should create an atmosphere in keeping with the theme of your activity.

The Decoration Chairman should work closely with the layout committee in determining placement of decorations. (Caution: Expensive decorations can get buried in the neon, flashing lights, and signage of exhibits, concessions, and carnivals.) Gateways and entrances are good choices for decoration dollars.

There are a number of free sources of decorations. Public school art classes might create posters for decoration; built on your theme, their display will also draw customers and generate interest. Shop classes might help, community artists might have a contest, and veteran organizations might be called upon to donate such items as flags. In any case, don't forget to thank them all, have credit signs at your information booth, and be sure to credit them all in your program.

#### **i. Communications**

Large or small, your key people need to communicate with each other during the event. Walkie-talkies are available to rent and are relatively inexpensive. During the event problems will come up which will require quick action, or at the very least, decisions that need to be made in a few seconds, which, without a radio may take a half hour or more. And that may be just to find a chairman in

the big crowd!

T-shirts, buttons, ribbons, and baseball caps are also excellent ways of communicating with the public as to who is an event official. And it is a nice “perk” to your worker. (A perk is defined as a free gift or benefit.)

Depending on the size of your event, the mobility of your staff and other selected individuals should be a concern. The larger the event the greater the concern. Three-wheel bikes and golf carts, etc., need to be considered for your key people, VIPs, media, etc.

#### **j. Handicap Facilities**

A rather small but important area of consideration for your physical layout committee is facilities for the handicapped.

Any local building inspector or contractor can give you the legal requirements for handicapped persons, relative to building codes. You can use these as a guideline for your planning. Basically, your layout planning will involve consideration for a person in a wheelchair. Mentally “wheel” yourself through your event. Where do you need a ramp? What stairs can’t you get up? What deep sand or gravel might stop your progress?

The solution to the handicapped situation might be as simple as posting a sign and advertising that handicapped people contacting you in advance would be escorted through your event on a golf cart.

#### **THE SHOW MUST GO ON!**

All planning is done, everything is in place and the curtain is going up on your event. If you have followed this manual reasonably well, you have a guarantee of success. This is your committee’s big day and they are all in position to make it happen. You are prepared for any emergency with your contingency plans, you are mobile with your communication system, your layout is established and decorated, your public is guaranteed by your promotion—you are ready!

It has been a long, hard, tiring time to reach this point. It is the time to enjoy the fruits of your effort. It is the time to have fun and take pride in what you have created for your state and your community.

## **SECTION IV WRAPPING UP YOUR FESTIVAL**

### **Evaluation**

Well, how did you do? You would be surprised at the events that cannot answer this question. They put on the show, but are not sure of how they did. They have no idea of attendance. They are not sure if they made money, and have no idea of how the community felt about their effort.

Within one week (while it is fresh in everyone’s minds) after the festival, have a wrap-up meeting. This meeting is geared to evaluating how you did. As with most of the other activities in your event, prior planning is essential to making this evaluation meaningful and productive. Evaluation starts with each chairman keeping accurate and complete records of his planning and execution. Basically, he should come to this meeting prepared to compare his plan with what actually happened.

Additionally, you must have one person free during the festival to do nothing but evaluate impartially each activity. During the event the evaluation committee

should interview, or distribute short evaluation forms to the exhibitors, crafts people, concessionaires, entertainers and general public. Place heavy weight on those professionals who travel the festival and event circuit. They will tell you quickly how your event compared to others. A quick, sure evaluation of your participants is a "sign up now for next year" form.

How many "do or don't" will tell you a lot about your success. How many people attended? If you have a ticketed event, counting the gate is simple. If not, you might try the police method of determining crowd size. Measure out a ten square yard area in your busiest traffic flow spot. At three given, spaced times during your festival, count the people in the square; add the three counts and divide by three to get an average. Multiply this number times the number of ten square yard areas that you have in the traffic path of your event. Multiply this by the hours that you had traffic flow and the results will be your estimated attendance.

Another good evaluation for your drawing area is a license plate check of your parking lots. Where did they come from? How far? How many?

### **Records**

Continuity is the key to increasing successful events and accurate records are the key to continuity. If at all possible, appoint a historian whose sole duty is to compile a scrapbook of the year's event. It may seem like an ego kick this year, but next year when you start to plan again, it will become your Bible. Be sure to include in your scrapbook copies of all budgets, planning, layouts, membership of committees, contingency plans, and, of course, final analysis reports from chairmen along with every scrap of publicity published.

Any radio station should be able to give you a copy of their public service announcements, time sheets, and, of course, your paid announcement times will appear on your billing.

### **Thank You's**

Recognizing all the people of your community who made your festival a success is essential. Recognition and thanks can take many forms, from a personal letter to a special gift, but we have found the most effective thanks is some type of certificate or presentation tied to your theme.

In any case, no matter how you do it, do it thoroughly. Thank everyone and anyone who contributed. Demand that the chairman keep lists of names and addresses of people who lent a hand and above all *never* say your thanks with a form letter.

### **Changing Leadership**

You close this year's event with the opening plans for next year. Few successful events "vacation" more than 90 days before they start their planning for next year. Who wants to continue in the same position? Who wants to move around? Who plans to drop out or move away? Determine these facts and go back to Section II, "Organizing Your Event" and start over.

First, establish your officers for the coming year by whatever means you set down in your by-laws. Presidencies are normally two-year terms in festivals and there is nothing wrong with this continuity of officers. Beyond two years of the same leadership tends to lead to stagnation and a lack of new ideas which are so essential for growth.

Now elect your new Board of Directors and establish areas of responsibility. Finally, start again on your recruitment campaign for new blood for next year. And have fun!

**END**

## SECTION V

### HELPFUL HINTS

1. No question is a dumb question.
2. Set next year's date before this year's event.
3. Make your own reference notebook.
4. Stay within the budget if it kills you.
5. Never put off till tomorrow the planning you can do today.
6. Flex your position before your muscles.
7. Make sure your event is in tune with the community.
8. Be open and acceptable to constructive criticism.
9. To receive the help, ask the experienced.
10. Plans can fail, but failure to plan guarantees it.
11. Ask permission and receive cooperation.
12. The hot water a legal advisor can keep you out of is worth all the cold water he can cast on your plans.
13. Remember the "Who, What, When, Where and How" in all your planning, promotion, and production.
14. If they can't park, they won't come.
15. Remember Murphy's first law of planning-"Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong!"
16. The "who is responsible" must be followed by a name before you start.
17. Enthusiasm makes it happen-complacency makes it fail.
18. Square pegs do not fit in round holes, even when they volunteer to try.
19. More failures have been for not asking than not agreeing.
20. Making a buck is not a bad four letter word.
21. The Indiana State Festivals Association is only a phone call away.

