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CONTACT:
800/516-0313
rebekahl@fairsandexpos.com

Sarah Cummings Recognized as Rising Star

LAS VEGAS, NV — December 8, 2014 — Today at the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) 124th Annual Convention, Sarah Cummings of the Sonoma-Marín Fair in Petaluma, Calif., was honored with the Rising Star Award, according to the IAFE President and CEO Jim Tucker. The convention is taking place Dec. 7-11, at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev.

The Rising Star Award was created by the IAFE Young Professionals Initiative (YPI) to recognize leadership and industry contributions of IAFE members, age 40 and younger. Nominees are any employee, volunteer, or board member under age 40 of a member fair, show, exposition, or exhibition in good standing with the IAFE.

Ms. Cummings grew up in Petaluma, where she exhibited at the fair. Her fair career began with an internship through the Western Fairs Association at the Marin County Fair in San Rafael, Calif. At the age of 23, she was named deputy manager of the Monterey County Fair in Monterey, Calif. A year later, she became CEO of the Salinas Valley Fair in King City, Calif. This past February, she took the position of CEO of Sonoma-Marín Fairgrounds and Event Center.

During her five years at the Salinas Valley Fair, Ms. Cummings oversaw an increase in the operating account of nearly 400%. The fair experienced record-breaking revenues with the carnival and livestock auction and completed a \$750,000 construction project. Prior to her departure, Ms. Cummings secured funding and began the design process for a \$1.5 million building remodel on the fairgrounds.

“Sarah has impressed the board as a rising professional with a seriousness of purpose and dedication to a job she truly enjoys,” stated Sonoma-Marín Fair Board President James Burlison.

Ms. Cummings has taken an active role in the fair industry. She has served the Western Fairs Association in numerous capacities, including as Central Coast Area Chair and on the Convention Showcase, Professional Development, and Agricultural Development Committees. She has served on the California Fairs Alliance Board, the King City Rotary Board, The King City Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Petaluma Rotary. She was a featured YPI VIP in the 2011 November/December issue of *Fairs & Expos*. In her current position, Ms. Cummings serves as CEO of the North of the Gate Wine Competition and the World’s Ugliest Dog® Contest. She also speaks annually at the collegiate level to promote fair management as an exciting career path.

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