

Delaware State Fair- Press Release

Delaware State Fair Regrettably Announces the Closure of the Centre Ice Rink Following Majority Board Vote

The Delaware State Fair, a long-time staple in the community, has announced it will be making the difficult decision to close the Centre Ice Rink in May 2025, resulting from unsustainable and compounding costs

Harrington, DE - January 24, 2025 – The Delaware State Fair, in line with their Board of Directors, has made the difficult decision to close the Centre Ice Rink following the 2025 Spring season. This necessary, but challenging business decision and Board vote follows several years of financial concerns, including increasing repair costs and ongoing difficulty to keep up with maintenance needs that have become financially unsustainable for the fair.

The decision to close and repurpose the Rink was not made lightly, and the Fair recognizes the significant impact this transition will have on the athletes, families, and organizations who have found a home at the rink. In a majority vote, the Board was presented with the specific financial reality the Fair was facing concerning the overwhelming mechanical failures combined with fiscal expenditures needed to open, run, and maintain the Ice rink. The community may not have seen all the work being done behind the scenes to ensure its suitable operational standing, but the extent of the issues came to light with several mechanical failures occurring in late November leading to overwhelming capital funds needed to bring the Rink online for current and future operations.

The Harrington and Delaware communities are always the top priority, which is why the Fair Staff, in combination with the Board, explored every option possible to keep Centre Ice Rink as a part of the community, but once learning of the immediate financial spend of over \$500,000 for urgent repairs in addition to over a million dollar commitment needed for the next few years –all isolated from day-to-day costs - it was determined that keeping the rink open and up to the quality the Harrington community members deserve would not be sustainable. It was with that factual evidence in mind that it was deemed that 2025 would be the Center Ice Rink’s final season. Since its opening over 20 years ago, the Centre Ice Rink has been an important community hub, offering a venue for ice skating, figure skating, and hockey. During the off-season, the rink was also converted to host a variety of events, including corporate events and fundraisers. Despite the rink’s valuable contribution to the community, the cost of maintaining and ultimately repairing the facility has become prohibitive, impacting the fair’s ability to effectively serve the community.

“We know how difficult this decision is for our community members who have called the Centre Ice Rink home for the past 20 years,” said the General Manager of the Delaware State Fair, Danny Aguilar. “Because we care deeply for our athletes, coaches, and their

families, it is important to us that we honor them during this transition and ensure they will receive ample time to find a new home before the next season begins in 8 months and we will be providing informational resources to assist in the transition. With new information coming online today a new option for families to consider would be the proposed Dover Civic Arena, a future home for ice skating programming.”

To better align resources with the fair’s mission of bettering our community, the building that once housed the ice rink will eventually be transformed into a multi-use event center. This new space will provide a year-round venue for endless opportunities and possibilities, including agricultural events, community gatherings, concerts, and youth programming. The event center will also serve as a location for musicians, comedians, artists, and performers, enriching the cultural experience for the Delaware Residents. There are many opportunities for this space to be a staple in the community once again, and the Fair hopes that all the families and community members can utilize this space in a new way.

The Delaware State Fair remains dedicated to hosting a vibrant community environment and continuing its long-standing tradition of supporting agricultural education and local events. Serving the community will always remain a top priority and the Fair looks forward to continuing to do so for years to come.

To learn more about The Delaware State Fair visit <https://www.delawarestatefair.com> or find them on Instagram.

About The Delaware State Fair

The Delaware State Fair, Inc. is a diverse, volunteer-supported, non-profit, community-based organization, that focuses on the preservation of the past, promotion of the present, and education in the future, of agriculture, horticulture, mechanical arts, and rural and domestic economy.

Media Contact:

Danny Aguilar

General Manager

danny@thestatefair.net

302.398.7000