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Northern WI State Fair hires new Executive Director

For Immediate Release

The Northern Wisconsin State Fair Association, Inc. Board of Directors has hired Brian Maki as its incoming Executive Director, replacing the current Executive Director, Rusty Volk, IFMG, CFE, who will retire on January 1, 2026. Brian has over 20 years of experience in upper-level leadership, with a successful track record of soliciting and maintaining sponsorships for Volume One's signature events. Brian has extensive experience in recruiting, interviewing, evaluating, hiring, and training employees, as well as proficiency in developing and administering advertising and event sponsorship agreements.

Brian has knowledge of the agricultural community from his work with The Country Today newspaper, the Tradin' Post Buyer's Guide, and was on the Promotions & Communications committee for the 2021 Farm Technology Days.

Rusty Volk stated, "Brian is well known in the Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls community and has a successful track record of building relationships with businesses and sponsoring events. I look forward to working with Brian and assisting him during this transition period". Rusty has served with the Fair Association for the past 17 years and has been instrumental in leading the redevelopment of the Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds. The annual Northern Wisconsin State Fair is the largest family-oriented event in Northern Wisconsin, with an attendance exceeding 100,000.

Jim Koehler, Fair Association president, stated, "The NWSF Executive Director position garnered applications from throughout the United States, and we were fortunate enough to have Brian apply right in his backyard. We are very excited to enter this new transition with Brian at the helm. Brian promises the continued success of the NWSF and is optimistic about all the possibilities this position affords the community.

Brian Maki commented. **"I'm honored, humbled, and absolutely thrilled to be joining the NWSF team!"**

Over the past 17 years, I've watched with admiration as the NWSF has evolved in remarkable ways. The positive transformation on so many levels has been nothing short of inspiring. It's clear that Rusty's leadership has been a driving force behind this success—evident in the passionate, talented staff he's assembled and the outstanding culture he and the Board of Directors have cultivated.

I'm deeply grateful to all of my past employers for what has essentially been a paid education throughout my career. A special shout-out to *Volume One*—representing such a dynamic organization has been an incredible experience and one that has prepared me well for this exciting next chapter in my 30+ year journey. Looking forward to what's ahead!"

Brian will join the Northern Wisconsin State Fair staff on June 30th to start his career in the Fair and Exposition industry.

"It has been an absolute pleasure to serve the Northern Wisconsin State Fair Association, Chippewa Falls community, IAFE, WAF, and all the service organizations in Chippewa Falls who utilize the Fairgrounds to attain their missions. I look forward to continued service in our community, mentoring the Fair Industry, volunteering, and enjoying time with my wife and family." (Rusty Volk IFMG, CFE)

About Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds: The Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds is a premier event venue located in Chippewa Falls, WI. Known for hosting a variety of community events, the fairgrounds provide a welcoming space for entertainment, education, and celebration.

