



Statement on behalf of Midwest Horse Fair, owned & presented by Wisconsin Horse Council

July 20, 2026

For more than four decades, the Midwest Horse Fair, the largest 3-day horse fair in the USA, has maintained a long-standing partnership with the Alliant Energy Center, serving as one of the facility's most successful and recognizable annual events. This enduring relationship reflects the Fair's commitment to Dane County and the City of Madison, as well as the value that the Alliant Energy Center provides as a premier venue capable of hosting a large-scale equine event. Focused on education and exhibition, the Midwest Horse Fair, owned and presented by WI Horse Council, has become a destination event that draws an estimated 60,000 attendees, 400 exhibitors, 800+ horses, 40+ clinicians and horse enthusiasts from throughout the Midwest and the USA, generating an estimated \$15 million economic impact annually for Dane County and the City of Madison.

While the Midwest Horse Fair supports thoughtful improvements and long-term investment in the Alliant Energy Center campus, the proposed renovations that may eliminate the use of the Coliseum for some or all MHF events will have a great impact on our event and the attendee experience. The Coliseum is the cornerstone arena of the Midwest Horse Fair and plays a critical role in the event's success. Its large seating capacity, Jumbotron and sound system allows thousands of spectators to comfortably attend the Fair's premier attractions, including breed demonstrations, exciting evening performances and educational clinics in an atmosphere that cannot be replicated in the smaller arenas. The Coliseum's ability to accommodate large audiences not only supports strong ticket sales and event revenues but also enhances the overall visitor experience, encouraging repeat attendance and strengthening the Fair's reputation as one of the nation's premier equine events as recognized by recent nominations for Western Horseman's 2026 event of the year and in 2025 the nomination for WI Governor's Award for Outdoor Industry Destination of the Year. The Coliseum has also afforded Midwest Horse Fair the opportunity to be the only WI PRCA Rodeo to be live streamed nationally to the Cowboy Channel+ that was viewed almost 1,900 hours in 2026. Overall, maintaining and enhancing the Coliseum is essential to preserving the Midwest Horse Fair's economic impact and attendance growth.

Ample and accessible parking is also essential to the success of the Midwest Horse Fair and the unique operational demands of an event that attracts 60,000+ attendees, exhibitors, volunteers, vendors, and participants over 3 days. Unlike many entertainment events, the Horse Fair relies not only on visitor parking but also on significant space for horse trailers, livestock transport, exhibitor

vehicles, equipment staging, and support operations. Convenient on-site parking is a key factor in the overall attendee experience and directly influences participation, attendance levels, traffic flow, and event safety. There are concerns that proposed mixed-use development enhancements could reduce available parking capacity, limit operational flexibility, or create competing demands for parking during major events. Any reduction in parking inventory or accessibility could negatively impact exhibitors and attendees, increase congestion, create logistical challenges for trailer and livestock movements, and diminish the Fair's ability to maintain its current scale and economic impact. As planning moves forward, it is critical that sufficient parking resources be preserved and protected to ensure the Midwest Horse Fair and other large-scale events can continue to thrive at the Alliant Energy Center for years to come.

As discussions regarding future development and enhancements at the Alliant Energy Center continue, it is important to recognize the Midwest Horse Fair as a proven, long-term economic driver and community partner. Protecting the infrastructure, facilities, parking, and operational capabilities necessary for the Fair's success will help ensure that this valuable event continues to contribute to the financial health of the Alliant Energy Center and the broader economic vitality of Dane County and the City of Madison for generations to come.
