

SANTA MARIA FAIRPARK

37th District Agricultural Association

CEO RECRUITMENT

Secretary Manager IV (CEO)



APPLICATION DEADLINE:
Monday, December 7, 2026

Join a unique organization rooted in California agriculture and driven by a legacy of community, tradition, and purpose.



CONTACT:

Kevin Merrill, Board Chair
SMFceosearch@gmail.com

937 S. Thornburg Street
Santa Maria, CA 93458

santamariafairpark.com

THE 37th DAA

Santa Maria Fairpark:

Home of the...

SANTA MARIA VALLEY Strawberry Festival

&

Santa Barbara County Fair

WEBSITE

www.santamariafairpark.com

FACILITIES

- Class size IV
- 33 acres
- Multiple exhibit buildings
- Livestock barns, show arena
- Outdoor event areas



SANTA MARIA FAIRPARK

ABOUT

The 37th District Agricultural Association (DAA), known as the Santa Maria Fairpark, is governed by a nine-member volunteer Board of Directors appointed by the Governor of California.

Located in the heart of California's Central Coast wine country, serving as a key venue for agricultural showcases, festivals, and community gatherings. The Fairpark's mission is to celebrate the area's rich heritage through education, entertainment, and innovation.

Operating under the oversight of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Fairs & Expositions Branch, the Fairpark serves as a major community hub for agriculture, entertainment, and education in northern Santa Barbara County.

FAIR FACTS

- Designated Emergency & Evacuation Center
- Fairgrounds & Event Center
- California State Entity
- 3 full time employees; 8 part-time employees
- $3M annual budget
- Fair Attendance 40,000 people over 4-days

Provide a year-round community facility and showcase our agricultural, historical, technological, and cultural diversity in a fun, safe environment.









AS THE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

THE POSITION

The Board of Directors seeks a highly qualified and motivated individual to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the 37th DAA.

The CEO reports directly to the Board, and is responsible for leadership, planning, and oversight of all Fairpark and day-to-day operations.



PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversee daily operations of the District and implementation of Board policies.
- Plan, organize, and produce the annual Santa Barbara County Fair.
- Maximize utilization of the fairgrounds for a wide range of community events.
- Ensure fiscal accountability, facility stewardship, and compliance with State policy and procedures.
- Serve as the primary public representative of the organization.
- Provide leadership in strategic planning and staff development.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Demonstrated leadership, team-building skills, and community relationships.
- Effective communicator, active listener, and transparent decision-maker.
- Ability to balance operational and strategic priorities.
- Commitment to high-quality customer service and community inclusion.
- Values collaboration with staff, Board, and regional stakeholders.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be an experienced, visionary leader with a passion for fiscal responsibility, community engagement, and the event industry.



KEY QUALITIES

- Strong management, budgeting, and public administration experience.
- Knowledge of marketing, sponsorships, and business development.
- Ability to work collaboratively with staff, volunteers, and public agencies.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Creative problem-solving and ability to lead through challenges.
- Integrity, diplomacy, and commitment to public service.

DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE

- Minimum 5 years of management experience in fairs, public venues, or comparable business operations.
- Experience working with boards, commissions, or elected bodies.
- Bachelor's degree preferred; equivalent professional experience considered.
- Experience in facility operations, maintenance, and event production.
- Familiarity with strategic, business, and master planning processes.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The compensation package will be offered based on experience and qualifications, including:

- Salary Exempt California State Classification of Secretary Manager IV, with a starting salary of $9,771 per month, with advancement up to $11,976.
- CalPERS Retirement.
- Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance (employee and family).
- Annual leave, holidays, and sick leave.
- Life insurance and deferred compensation plan.

APPLICATION PROCESS









This is a confidential recruitment handled directly by the 37th District Agricultural Association Board of Directors.

Interested candidates should submit the following materials:

- Completed State of California Employment Application (STD 678)
- Comprehensive resume
- Statement of Interest & Qualifications — Describe why you are interested and how your experience prepares you for the CEO role
- Five (5) professional reference letters

Send all application materials electronically to:
SMFceosearch@gmail.com.

Applications will be reviewed after the application deadline and interviews will be scheduled by the Board of Directors. All inquiries and submissions will remain confidential until finalists are selected.

TIMELINE

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, December 7, 2026

FIRST ROUND INTERVIEWS: Week of December 14th

SECOND ROUND INTERVIEWS: Week of January 4th



