



Media Contact

Brandon Bird

(208) 785-2480

[brandon@funatthefair.com](mailto:brandon@funatthefair.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FAIR CHOOSES LOIS BATES AS ITS INAUGURAL FRIEND OF THE FAIR RECOGNITION**

**BLACKFOOT, ID – AUGUST 2, 2023** - Starting in 2023, the Eastern Idaho State Fair will honor up to three people annually who have significantly contributed to the Fair and its cherished traditions of family, community, and hard work. Lois Ethel Prouse Bates has been selected for this inaugural recognition for her exceptional contributions to the Fair, including composing its historical record spanning 121 years. Lois is an extraordinary woman who has been integral to preserving and promoting this important cultural event, the Eastern Idaho State Fair.

When Lois Bates' name is mentioned, people often think of her as the history guru of Bingham County. She has spent her 94 years as a resident of Blackfoot and has accumulated numerous photographs and information on people and events in Bingham County. But she is so much more.

During the 1930s, Lois had a happy childhood on Riverton Road. She loved playing games, doing chores, and spending time with her large, extended family. Unfortunately, when she was only four, her father died from injuries sustained in a horse roping accident. Following his death, Lois, her brother Dale, and their mother, Luella Wright Prouse, moved in with Luella's parents on the farm on Riverton Road. As a single mother, Luella worked as a secretary at the EISF to provide for her family. Lois and Dale grew up attending the fairgrounds, enjoying all the sights and sounds of the Fair, and meeting many famous fair celebrities. Lois has always had a passion for writing and composing the history of Bingham County. Still, her mother's connection to the Fair as its secretary has made the Fair's history her particular interest.

"The Fair owes a lot to Lois Bates. She has compiled so much of the Fair's history that we refer back to. Because of her, we can connect with the 121 years of traditions, which is priceless. She is a remarkable woman whose life is an example of how anyone can do extraordinary things." - Brandon Bird, General Manager, Eastern Idaho State Fair.

When raising her young family, Lois started a tradition they all looked forward to every year, spending an afternoon together at the Fair. "We would eat cotton candy and candied apples, wander through the livestock barns, marvel at the Culligan water spout, admire the fresh flower arrangements to see if Grandpa Bates had won a blue ribbon, and have a blast on the rides. We always made sure to ride the Tilt-a-Whirl together, and the Ferris Wheel never failed to scare us. And, of course, we had to buy the latest trinket!" said Bates. This tradition of a family day at the Fair has continued with Lois' posterity as they started their own families and always made sure to take loved ones on an afternoon trip to the Fair. In recent years, Lois' family has brought her to the Fair at least once, even though she now needs to be pushed around in a wheelchair. The Fair always puts a smile on her face and brings back fond memories of past Fairs.

Lois, a lifelong resident of Blackfoot, has an impressive record of community service. She has been a Girl Scout Leader for over 50 years and was honored with the Silver Sage Girl Scout Award. Additionally, she is a past President & Secretary and an active member of the Bingham County Historical Society and the local Bingham County Historian. Lois has also contributed significantly to the field of journalism as a staff writer for many newspapers in eastern Idaho. She is a proud member of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers and has authored three volumes on Bingham County History as well as the History of Shilling Street. Faith has been at the core of her life, being a faithful and active member of her church.

Lois Bates' dedication and contribution to the Eastern Idaho State Fair and Bingham County's history are immeasurable. She has preserved the Fair's traditions and ensured that future generations can learn about its rich history. Lois' passion for writing, community service, and family has made her an outstanding person, and it is a pleasure to honor her as the inaugural recipient of this Friend of the Fair recognition. We hope Lois' life will inspire others to continue preserving and promoting the Fair's cultural significance.

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*The Eastern Idaho State Fair is a 16-County Fair District. It is Eastern Idaho's longest-running and largest community event with nearly 250,000 attendees each year. The mission of the EISF is to provide wholesome, affordable family education and entertainment in a clean and safe agricultural environment. It is never too early to get excited for the 2023 Fair, which will be held September 1-9, 2023!*