cafe

Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions

Association canadienne des foires et expositions

ANNUAL REPORT

24

25





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2024-2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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About CAFE

The Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (CAFE) is the national voice of Canada's fairs, exhibitions, and agricultural societies. We connect, support, and advocate for our members to ensure the fair sector continues to thrive as a vital driver of rural economic development, agricultural awareness, and community celebration.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"Individually we are one drop, but together we are an ocean."

— Ryunosuke Satoro

An association, by definition, is "a connection or cooperative link between people and organizations." In refection of the past year, I am impressed by the extensive list of positive and fulfilling connections made as well as numerous stories of collaboration embedded in the activities of your association, the Canadian Association of Fairs & Exhibitions (CAFE) . From coast to coast, we asked for your input, support, and feedback to guide our actions and developments. These efforts included a number of initiatives, highlighted in our Year in Review, included in this Annual Report. Each class of our membership was involved, from volunteer fair representatives to paid fair staff, service members and Provincial Agriculture Associations as well as associate members of CAFE.

This list of accomplishments has been built upon the solid foundation set in 2024 and the efforts of the Board leaders who have served in the past. It is this guidance and mentorship that have launched CAFE forward over the past year. Together with the expertise and skill of our Executive Director, Linda Sicoli, the progress of the association has been notable.

Our Board

This year we welcomed new board members at the AGM, and when changes were required, members stepped up once again to fill open roles. Their willingness to contribute brought new expertise, perspective, and energy to our discussions. We also increased transparency between the Executive and the full Board, ensuring that every Director was informed and engaged in Board activities. In May, we devoted focused time to better understand our composition, strengths, and work styles, creating a stronger sense of collaboration and shared purpose in how we work together.

Our Association

The past year also marked an important milestone as we celebrated 100 years of CAFE. and entered our 101st year with renewed hope and energy. We continued to advance each of the pillars of the Strategic Plan — Be the Voice, Services that Drive Value, and Fostering Productive Collaboration — and, as we enter the final year of our current plan, we are already extending our gaze to the future and our next five years. Communication remained a key priority as well. From tariff impacts and 4-H developments to broader agricultural and regulatory issues, we worked to ensure our members had the information needed to prepare, grow, and thrive.

Moving from planning and preparing in the spring through the heat of the summer fair season, the fall gives pause to measure, assess and celebrate the year gone by..... and reminds us all of the economic power of Canadian fairs in both our communities and on a national level.

Our industry is well positioned to be that connection for the communities that we serve. CAFE is grateful to truly be an association – the place of connection and collaboration – for members to gather, share, solve and celebrate. Thank you for your trust and support of the work of CAFE. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work with such a dedicated and talented board and an Executive Director who share this passion for connection and collaboration. I would especially like to acknowledge Amanda Frigon who will be leaving the board this AGM. Amanda has been instrumental to CAFE to bring the organization through several rough spots including ED transition and a pandemic. Amanda has been a true champion of the industry and has been a great friend and mentor to me personally. This Board continues to go above and beyond And together with the membership, we are resilient, we are connected and we are committed to a future full of promise and strength.

Until next time,

Allison Wright

President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."

— Vincent Van Gogh

Dear Members, Partners, and Friends,

This past year has been one of focus and transition for CAFE. Together, we've advanced important work that strengthens our foundation and positions our sector for the future.

Through the governance review, members provided thoughtful input on representation, costs, and renewal. This dialogue has shaped priority actions already underway, including reducing barriers to Board participation, building stronger competency-based representation, and increasing the role of provincial associations.

Our advocacy efforts also gained momentum. From advancing the Temporary Foreign Worker exemption to championing rural infrastructure and recognition of fairs as vital economic drivers, CAFE's voice has become stronger and more coordinated on Parliament Hill and beyond.

At the same time, we have continued to build sector capacity. With the Designation Program curriculum ready, efforts now turn to delivery, marketing, and administration. Youth leadership initiatives remain a priority, ensuring succession and fresh perspectives for our industry.

We have also focused on communications and connection, sharing stories through Canadian Fair News, amplifying member voices, and celebrating the impact fairs and exhibitions have on local economies and communities across Canada.

Looking ahead, we are focused on delivering sector programs, strengthening our advocacy, and expanding the support we provide to members. Each step is guided by one goal: ensuring that fairs and exhibitions remain resilient, relevant, and recognized as cornerstones of Canadian community life.

Thank you to our members, sponsors, and partners for your trust and support. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the CAFE Board for their leadership and guidance, which continue to shape and strengthen our path forward. Together, we are building a stronger and more inclusive future for our sector.

With gratitude,

Linda Sicoli

Executive Director

YEAR IN REVIEW

Advocacy & Government Relations

CAFE expanded its national advocacy efforts to strengthen recognition of fairs as vital to Canada's rural and economic fabric.

- **TFW Program:** Partnered with Temple Scott Associates to defend the exemption critical for fair operators.
- **Pre-Budget Submissions:** Advanced priorities in rural infrastructure, tourism, and the economic role of fairs to the Finance Committee and Finance Canada.
- **Parliament Hill Engagement:** Coordinated meetings with MPs, Senators, and Ministries to highlight fairs as engines of rural vitality.

Governance Review

In 2024–25, CAFE undertook a national governance review to improve representation, accountability, and inclusivity. Consultations included over 100 surveyed participants across member classes and interviews with 13 sector leaders representing diverse regions and organizations.

Key Themes from Members:

- **Affordability:** Reduce costs of participation (e.g., board travel, convention fees).
- **Skills & Composition:** Support for a competency-based model with a formal skills matrix.
- **Provincial Associations:** Broader involvement requested; general support for more seats.
- **Diversity & Renewal:** Greater inclusion of youth, Indigenous voices, and leadership succession.
- **Transparency:** Clearer nominations and decision-making processes.

Priority Actions:

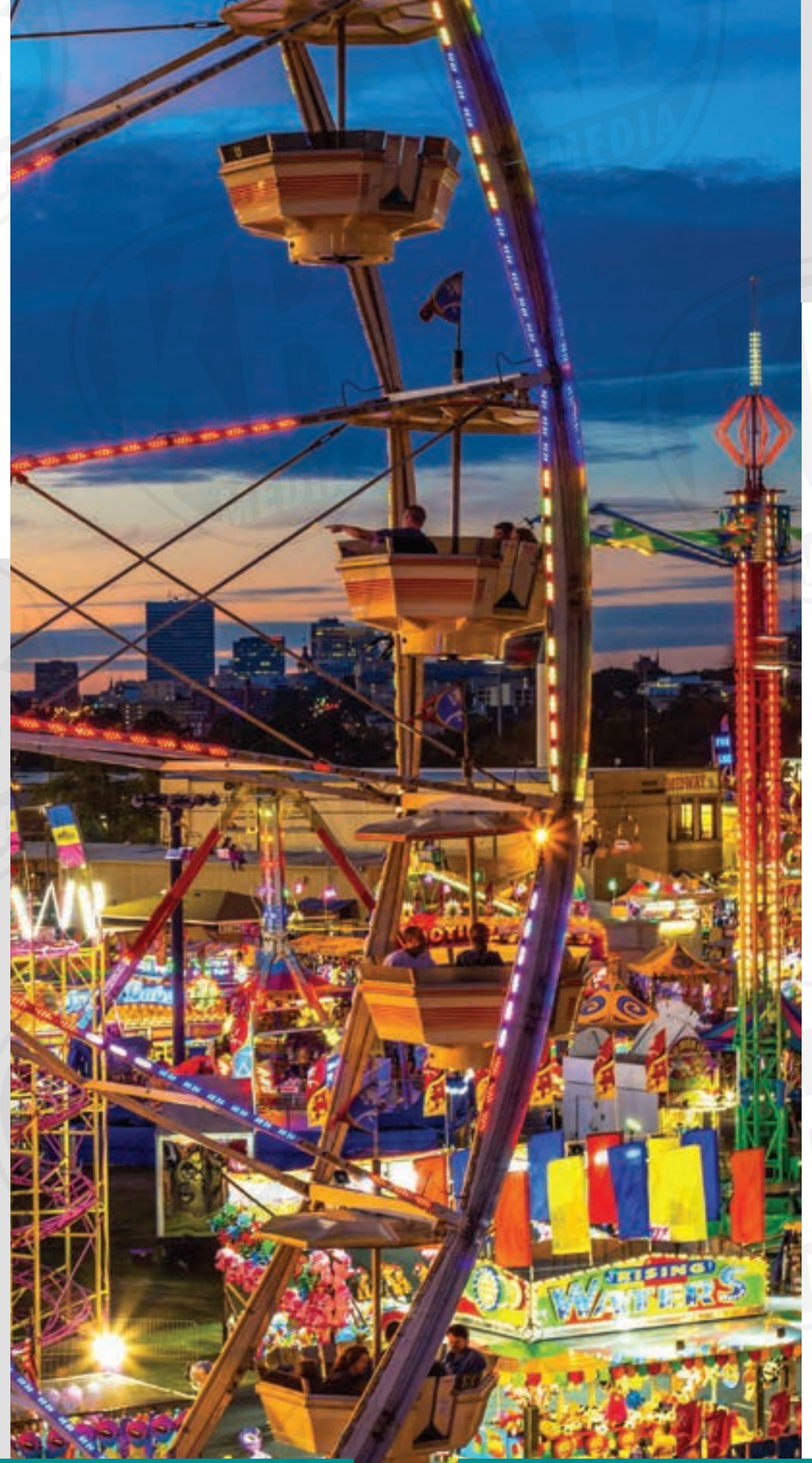
01 Reduce time/cost of board participation (fewer in-person meetings, lower convention costs).

02 Increase Provincial Association seats while reducing Volunteer Fair seats.

03 Implement a skills-based matrix.

04 Balance regional (zones) and member class representation.

05 Strengthen diversity in governance.



Next Steps:

- **Nov 21, 2025 AGM:** Member vote on increasing Provincial Association seats.
- **Post-AGM:** Begin regional representation and governance changes.
- **Feb 2026:** Special meeting to adopt further bylaw amendments.

Communications & Publications

- **Canadian Fair News:** Continued to showcase member achievements, trends, and service members through print and digital editions, including a renewed celebration of rising leaders through the Top 10 Under 40.
- **Newsletter & Digital Updates:** Expanded the reach and consistency of our member newsletter, providing timely updates on sector news, funding opportunities, advocacy efforts, and upcoming events to keep members informed and connected.
- **Member Engagement:** Delivered targeted communications on advocacy, learning, and opportunities, and facilitated meaningful dialogue with members throughout the governance review process to ensure transparency, input, and alignment with sector priorities.

NATIONAL AWARDS

The Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (CAFE) recognizes exceptional contributions to the fairs and exhibitions industry through its National Awards. This year's recipients demonstrate leadership, innovation, and dedication to community impact.



Roll of Honour Award:

Marla Calico

Retired CEO, International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE)

Marla Calico is celebrated for her influential leadership in the global fair industry. She transformed IAFE into an international association, advocating for educational programming and agricultural literacy.
During the pandemic, her guidance helped fairs navigate financial uncertainty. Marla's commitment to industry growth and best practices makes her a deserving Roll of Honour recipient.



Roll of Honour Award:

Vince Brennan

Executive Director, Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS)

Vince Brennan is recognized for his lifelong advocacy for agriculture and rural fairs. Under his leadership, OAAS secured crucial funding and advanced governance training for agricultural societies. He modernized OAAS's resources and led impactful advocacy efforts.
Vince's dedication to the agricultural fair community has made a lasting impact.



Canadian Fair Champion Award:

Brett Warder

Manager, Agriculture & Western Events Operations, Calgary Stampede

With over 30 years at the Calgary Stampede, Brett Warder has shaped agricultural and western events through exceptional leadership. He enhanced exhibitor experiences and championed animal welfare initiatives. Brett's influence extends across North America, contributing to industry best practices and innovative event management.



Canadian Fair Champion Award:

Sean Chase

Director and Program Chairperson, Paris Agricultural Society

Sean Chase has dedicated over 40 years to the Paris Fair, enhancing entertainment programming and community engagement. His leadership brought record-breaking attendance and introduced innovative events celebrating rural heritage. Sean's passion and industry connections have transformed the Paris Fair into a vibrant community hub.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31, 2025

Independant Auditor's Report

To the Members:

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions which comprise the balance sheet as at July 31, 2025, and the statements of members' equity, income and cash flow for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significantaccounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions as at July 31, 2025, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Accounting Standards for Not-For-Profit Organizations (ASNPO).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonablybe expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standards (CASs), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control.

Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.

Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.

Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern.
 f we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.

Evaluate the overall presentation, structure, and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

DS CPA Professional Corporation:
Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

Smiths Falls, Ontario

October 23, 2025

Statement of Financial Position

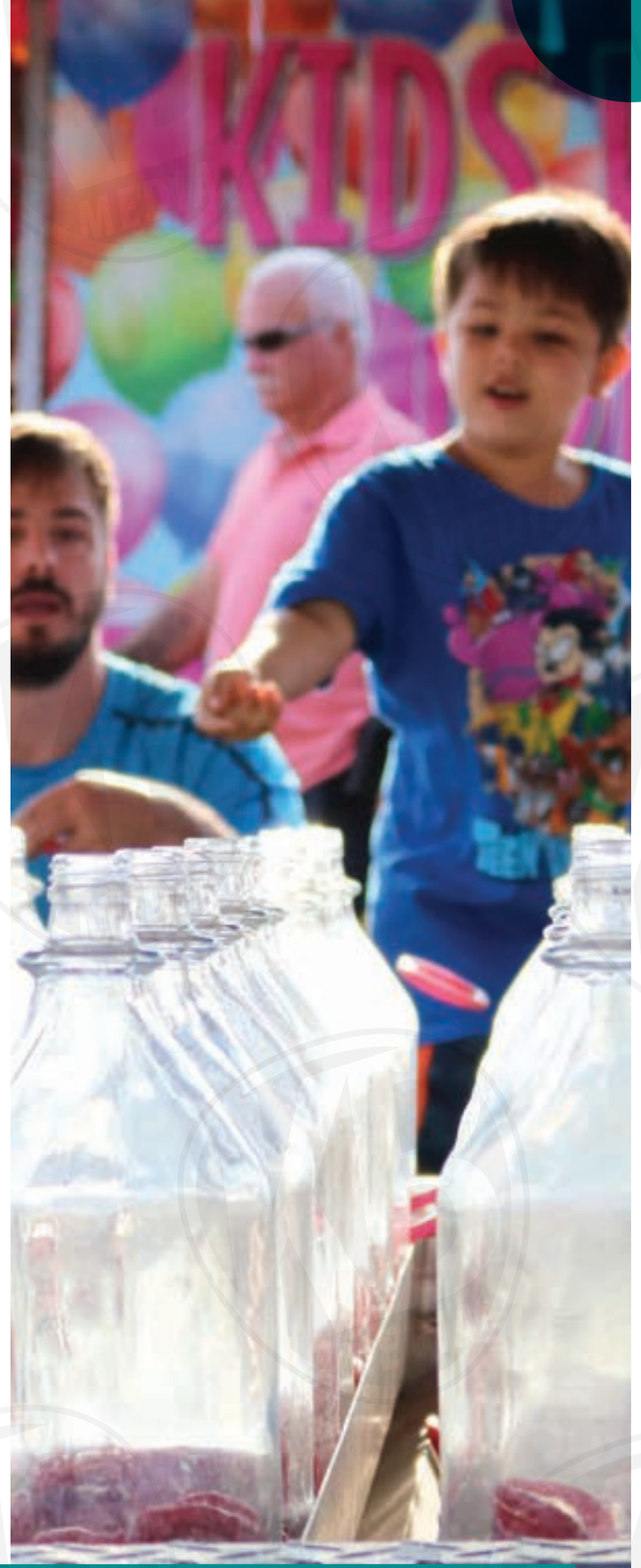
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31, 2025

Assets

	2025	2024
CURRENT		
Cash	$222,786	$199,078
Investments - at cost (note 5)	$90,000	$90,000
Accounts receivable:		
- other (note 4)	-	$18,310
- government including GST/HST	$1,215	$1,532
Prepaid expense	$46,475	$27,474
	$360,476	**$336,394**
CAPITAL - AT COST		
Computer	$1,923	$1,923
Less accumulated amortization	$1,282	$641
	$641	**$1,282**
	$361,117	**$ 337,676**

Liabilities

	2025	2024
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$668	$16,590
Deferred income	$131,726	$51,648
	$132,394	**$68,238**
LONG TERM		
CNE Loan payable (note 6)	$120,000	$120,000
MEMBERS' EQUITY		
Unrestricted	$41,827	$82,542
Externally Restricted (note 9)	$66,896	$66,896
	$361,117	**$337,676**



Statement of Operations and Member's Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31, 2025

Revenues

	2025	2024
Memberships	$81,210	$80,547
Convention	$188,125	$162,325
Fair News & Directory	$2,694	-
Special Projects, net of $50,288 shortfall re AAFC project	-	$13,229
CAFE Service Levy	$2,200	$18,324
Merchandise, donations and other income	$17,228	$33,015
Lobbying Support sponsorship	$152,436	-
	$443,893	**$307,440**

Expenses

	2025	2024
Management and administration	$188,780	$167,824
Convention	$176,468	$154,505
Lobby Subcontractor	$103,940	-
Fair News and Directory	$13,213	$12,492
Special Projects	$2,207	($4,493)
	$484,608	$330,328
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditures	($40,715)	($22,888)
Members' Equity, Beginning of Year	$82,542	$105,430
MEMBERS' EQUITY, END OF YEAR	**$41,827**	**$82,542**

Statement of Cash Flow

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31, 2025

Operating Activities

	2025	2024
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures	($40,715)	($22,888)
Amortization	$641	$641
	($40,074)	**($22,247)**
CHANGES IN CERTAIN NON-CASH OPERATING ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
Accounts receivable	$18,626	$34,154
Deferred costs	-	$7,582
Prepaid expense	($19,001)	($15,184)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	($15,922)	($4,986)
CEBA Loan Payable	$1	($13,100)
Deferred revenue	$80,078	($18,320)
	$63,782	**($9,854)**
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Increase in long-term debt	-	$120,000
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of capital assets	-	($1,923)
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND EQUIVALENTS DURING THE YEAR	$23,708	$85,976
CASH AND EQUIVALENTS, AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	$289,078	$203,102
CASH AND EQUIVALENTS,AT END OF YEAR (NOTE 8)	**$312,786**	**$289,078**

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31, 2025

1. Organization

The Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions/Association Canadienne des Foires et Expositions (CAFE/ACFE) is the national association representing fairs, exhibitions and agricultural society organizations and such firms, organizations and enterprises as may rely on the Canadian Fair Industry for an important part of their continuing livelihood.

The CAFE/ACFE was originally incorporated under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act as a not-for-profit organization and qualifies as a registered charity under the Income Tax Act. The Association has received certification of continuance under the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.

2. General

Basis of Presentation:

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-forprofit organizations.

3. Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of accounting
Revenue and expenditures are recorded on the accrual basis whereby they are reflected in the accounts in the period in which they have been earned and incurred respectively, whether or not such transactions have beenfinally settled by the receipt or payment of money.

(b) Revenue Recognition
The Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions/Association Canadienne des Foires et Expositions follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and its collection is reasonably assured.

Membership fees are recorded in the year they are related to. Contributed services, conference, advertising for publications and project revenues are recorded in the year the function or supply takes place. The CAFE Service Levy is recorded when received.

(c) Use of estimates
The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenditures during the year. Actual results could differ from these estimates. Significant estimates and assumptions include the carrying amount of accounts receivable and accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

(d) Contributed Materials and Services
Contributed costs are recognized when the fair value can be reasonably estimated and when the materials and services are used in the normal course of the Association's operations and would otherwise have been purchased.

4. Accounts Receivable

Accounts receivable includes $3,080 due from Ottawa Tourism Bureau and $15,230 re AAFC Building Public Trust, whereas 2023 included $50,288 representing the balance of funding anticipated from the AAFC Building Public Trust project which was partially received.

5. Short-Term Investments

Investments, comprise a BMO Conservative ETF Portfolio mutual fund ($90,000).

6. CNE Loan Payable

Pursuant to a loan agreement dated June 11, 2024 with the Canadian National Exhibition Association, no repayment is required within 24 months of the date of disbursement of the loan. Subsequent to this 24 month period, repayments are required over the following 24 month period. Interest is payable at the prime lending rate plus 2% subsequent to the first 24 month period.

7. Financial Instrument Risks and Uncertainties

The Association's financial instruments consist of cash, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. The carrying amounts reported on the balance sheet for these financial instruments approximate fair market values due to their immediate or short-term maturities.

Credit risk
Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge and obligation. The Association is not exposed to credit risk.

Liquidity risk
Liquidity risk is the risk that the Association will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities. The Association constantly monitors its liquidity risk through current and future cash flows and financial liability maturities.

Market risk
Market risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate as a result of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency risk, interest rate risk, and other price risk. The Association is not exposed to market risk.

Currency risk
Currency risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in foreign exchange rates. The Association is not exposed to this risk.

Interest rate risk
Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Association is not exposed to this risk.



Other price risk
Other price risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices (other than those arising from interest rate risk or currency risk), whether those changes are caused by factors specific to the individual financial instrument or its issuer, or factors affecting all similar financial instruments traded in the market. The Association is not exposed to this risk.

Changes in risk
There have been no significant changes in the Association's risk exposures from year to year.

8. Cash and Equivalents

Cash and equivalents consist of the following:

	2025	2024
Cash	$222,786	$199,078
Investments	$90,000	$90,000
	$312,786	**$289,078**

9. Externally Restricted Equity

During 2023, the Central Canada Exhibition Association donated to the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions the sum of $66,896 for the purpose of sponsoring scholarships for youth. The money is to be invested and designated sums as determined by CAFE to be withdrawn yearly for presentation to selected youth. There were no disbursements or investment income in fiscal 2025 or 2024.

10. Subsequent Event - Contigent Liability

During the fiscal year, management was informed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada of a potential overpayment related to funding received under the AgriCommunication Program, Project ACOM-002: "Bridging the Gap via Fairs and Exhibitions."

The total amount in question is $57,165.50, representing an advance payment issued in November 2022. Subsequent review by the funder identified items requiring further clarification and reconciliation. The funder has indicated that, unless the project expenses can be substantiated in accordance with the Contribution Agreement, repayment of all or a portion of this amount may be required.

Management has engaged with the project officer to review the matter and is in the process of providing additional information to support the claim. At this time, the outcome of the review process cannot be reasonably determined, and therefore, no provision has been recorded in these financial statements.

Should repayment be required, the amount could be up to $57,165.50.

LOOKING AHEAD

CAFE is committed to:

- Implementing governance changes approved at the 2025 AGM.
- Delivering the Designation Program and Youth Leadership initiatives in 2026.
- Expanding recognition of fairs' impact through advocacy, research, and storytelling.
- Increasing member value through new resources, training, and partnerships.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

The story of CAFE is written by its members, partners, and communities.

Each fair, exhibition, and agricultural society represents countless hours of volunteerism, creativity, and resilience. Together, you make our sector stronger and ensure that the tradition of gathering, celebrating, and showcasing Canadian culture continues to thrive.

To our members, we thank you for your trust, your commitment, and the spirit of collaboration that drives our work forward.

To our sponsors and partners, accept our sincere thanks for believing in the value of fairs and exhibitions, and for helping us amplify their impact across Canada.

To our Board of Directors and volunteers, we are grateful for your leadership, wisdom, and tireless support.

Because of you, fairs and exhibitions remain at the heart of our communities, reminding us of the joy of connection and the strength of working together.

With gratitude,
Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions

Join us next year from November 9 -13, 2026 in Halifax, Nova Scottia!



cafe

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Association canadienne des foires et expositions

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