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March 7, 2012

Mr. Ewell Welch  
Arkansas Livestock Association  
P.O. Box 31  
Little Rock, AR 72203

Dear Ewell,

The City of Little Rock remains committed to supporting the Arkansas Livestock Association and the Arkansas State Fair in your current location on Roosevelt Road. As you know, the citizens' passage of the recent sales tax increase commits \$3 million to its future redevelopment. We hope after the Committee's review of alternate sites, you will conclude that the best opinion for everyone is to expand and invest in the current facilities and continue to build upon the extensive history and tradition that the State Fairgrounds brings to the Capital City. In keeping with that belief, I would like to memorialize opportunities that we have discussed recently with Executive Director Ralph Shoptaw.

**Opportunity One:**

Recognizing your desire to expand your acreage, we recommend the fairgrounds, in conjunction with the City, begin to acquire land to the east of the existing venue (as shown on the attachment - Area A). The Little Rock Housing Authority is the largest single land owner in this area and has expressed a willingness to make the property available. Also, the City of Little Rock has several liens on certain parcels (delineated on the attachment by red squares) in this area and is prepared to initiate proceedings to acquire title to these properties. Other parcels could be pursued through negotiated sales or, as noted before, the Arkansas Livestock Association, through the Arkansas Building Authority, has the ability to acquire real property through eminent domain for expansion purposes of the fairgrounds. If the entire parcel was acquired, it would add 51 acres to the existing 148 acres covered by your current 50-year lease.

**Opportunity Two:**

Just west of the fairgrounds are two railroad tracks that ultimately merge into one track north of Wright Avenue. The City is prepared to work with the Fairgrounds and the

railroad to merge the two tracks together farther to the south on an existing railbed which would open up a large section of land for expansion (as shown on the attachment – Area B). By removing the eastern track and with some land modification, the fairgrounds could expand to the west by approximately 34 acres. Most of this land is owned by the City and the State so acquisition costs would be minimal.

#### Opportunity Three:

Additional property is also available. Continuing west of the fairgrounds and east of Woodrow Street, is a large industrial property (as shown on the attachment – Area C). This property includes open space, parking and indoor facilities that could be incorporated into the fairgrounds. The owner of the property has expressed an interest in making this property available for future uses by the Fairgrounds. Should this parcel be used, it would add another 47 acres to the venue. The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department will be replacing the Roosevelt bridge over the railroad. They have been very cooperative with the City in visioning a wide pedestrian walkway allowing easy access to this property.

#### Opportunity Four:

Assuming the fairgrounds chooses to stay in the current location, the City will also begin investigating the possibility of a southern entrance into the venue. As we have discussed with Mr. Shoptaw, it may be possible to exit the Interstate off Arch Street and run parallel to the railroad tracks, entering the fairgrounds on its southern boundary. This would provide another access and egress point for fairgrounds visitors. While there are many details to work out and consider, the City is committed to see if this is feasible.

As a reminder, should the Arkansas Livestock Association choose to stay on Roosevelt Road, the City of Little Rock is prepared to offer the following:

1. City staff to work with the Arkansas Livestock Association to develop a plan to improve the streetscape along all main routes to the fairgrounds and in assisting in various ways to enhance the adjoining neighborhoods. Utilizing the City resources, it may be possible to acquire federal program dollars to meet these needs.
2. Regardless of your decision, the City is aggressively pursuing the condemnation and demolition of the dilapidated housing stock around the locations of the fairgrounds. Some are in litigation, which soon should be resolved.
3. With respect to access and visibility, as an alternate to Opportunity Four above, the City of Little Rock will work with Metroplan and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department on developing a new interchange off of I-30, which is in close proximity to the southern boundaries of the fairgrounds, thus providing direct access to I-30. A new interchange along I-30, between I-530 and 65<sup>th</sup> Street, will be proposed with a connection north to an improved Battery Street, ultimately connecting to Roosevelt Road.

4. The City of Little Rock believe that it may be possible to utilize USDA Community Facility (CF) loan dollars to enhance the existing facilities, and will work with our federal lobbyist to explore the process for such a project.
5. The City of Little Rock believes that many of the existing buildings at the State Fairgrounds qualify for Historic Preservation of Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resource Commission dollars. The City will offer its grant writers to prepare funding applications for the rehabilitation of various buildings on the grounds as identified by the Arkansas Livestock Association.
6. Every year, the City of Little Rock Police Department provides staff to ensure the area around the fairgrounds is safe and secure for all visitors attending the event. This is done at an average annual cost of \$122,000. The City remains committed to providing this service in future years.
7. The City of Little Rock, through its Advertising and Promotion Commission, is a sponsor of the State Fair and also periodically directs event opportunities to the State Fairgrounds that are better suited for the fairgrounds facilities. The City of Little Rock is committed to working with the Fair committee to develop multiple sponsorships and naming rights for buildings. Through our staff at the A&P Commission, we will look for creative ways to direct more events to the State Fairgrounds and create a closer coordination in the promotion of events located at the Fairgrounds.

In closing, the City of Little Rock believes that building upon the existing location is financially realistic and with a concerted effort, can easily address the current concerns and future needs of the Arkansas Livestock Association. We remain committed to helping you achieve your objectives in the current location. Please let me know your thoughts and, if you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

Mark Stodola  
Mayor

Enclosure