

## State Fair connects to thousands through social media

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### Social media presence contributes to nearly 30 percent increase in Web site traffic to official site



**The Great New York State Fair** is communicating with thousands of fairgoers on a daily basis by using social media to provide updates and stay connected to a community of fans and followers that stretches from Hawaii to Wisconsin to New York. It includes 19 countries besides the United States.

By using **Twitter (@NYSFair)**, **Facebook (The Great New York State Fair fan page)**, e-blast announcements, e-newsletters, text messaging and online sharing tools, the Fair has been able to regularly share information and interact directly with individuals interested in the Fair.

"People today get their news and information in many different ways, and we want to make sure we reach out to as many people as possible," New York State Fair Director Dan O'Hara said. "It makes sense to use all the tools technology can give us to communicate with people who are interested in the Fair."

The Fair's social media presence has contributed to a nearly 30 percent increase in Web site traffic to the Fair's official site ([www.nysfair.org](http://www.nysfair.org)) when comparing the 14 days leading up to the 2009 Fair (Aug. 13-26, 2009) to the 14 days leading up to the 2008 Fair (Aug. 7-20, 2008). During the 14 days leading up to the Fair, there were 35,664 more page views this year compared to 2008.

During that time period, Facebook was the second highest "referring site" to the official Fair site besides users clicking through from [syracuse.com](http://syracuse.com), a major newspaper's site that featured daily stories about the Fair and online Fair banner advertising. Referring sites do not include users going directly to the site or using search engines.

#### Facebook

On The Great New York State Fair Facebook fan page ([www.facebook.com/nysfair](http://www.facebook.com/nysfair)), the Fair posts a countdown to Opening Day and information about new exhibits, new attractions, concerts, competitions, advance sale tickets, annual traditions, transportation, and more.

With more than 17,000 fans signed up on the Facebook page, fans are able to post comments about Fair foods, Fair memories and Fair entertainment, and engage in online conversations. Fans can also ask basic questions about attractions, view Fair photos and take the "Favorite Fair Food" poll.

Recently the New York State Fair held multiple Facebook contests to win tickets to Kenny Chesney's Aug. 28 concert at the Fair. To be eligible, fans were required to change their profile picture to the 2009 Fair logo and post their favorite Chesney song.

#### Twitter

The Great New York State Fair uses Twitter - a "micro-blogging" service that allows individuals to make posts up to 140 characters - to deliver news, make concert announcements, unveil new exhibits and share fun facts about the Fair.

The Fair is currently running a series of Twitter contests exclusively for its followers. To enter, individuals must follow [www.twitter.com/nysfair](http://www.twitter.com/nysfair) and respond to contest questions. Rules are posted for each contest.

Recent contests to win a pair of general admission ticket included guessing the number of \$1 baked potatoes sold in the Horticulture Building during the 2008 Fair (50,966) and guessing the number of blue ribbons awarded at the 2008 Fair (12,000).

#### E-blasts and e-newsletters

Fairgoers have the option to sign up at [www.nysfair.org](http://www.nysfair.org) for the Fair's free e-blast announcements and e-newsletter service. Subscribers receive e-mail updates on the latest concert announcements and Fair news.

They can also be the first to know about special deals. Subscribers were recently invited to purchase discount-priced tickets for the Kelly Clarkson and Gavin DeGraw concert at the Mohegan Sun Grandstand on Aug. 27.

### **Text messaging**

Fairgoers also have the option to sign up at [www.nysfair.org](http://www.nysfair.org) for the Fair's free text message announcements. Normal text messaging rates apply. Subscribers receive updates on the latest concert announcements and Fair news.

Through a text messaging contest, the Fair is giving away four-packs of tickets to see ventriloquist Jeff Dunham's nearly-sold out Aug. 30 show. Contest information is periodically shown on the big screen next to Chevrolet Court to inform fairgoers about how to enter.

### **Sharing Tools**

In addition to revamping the Web site overall, the Fair's site includes a "Share" button at the bottom of each page, which allows users to e-mail a favorite page to friends and family.

The 2009 New York State Fair runs in Syracuse, N.Y., from Aug. 27 to Sept. 7.