

**DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
Tuesday March 3, 2026**

A G E N D A

4:00 p.m.

- Fair and Rodeo Updates
- 2026 Fireworks and Drone Show Schedule

Agenda Item

Date: 3/3/2026
To: Douglas County Board of County Commissioners
Through: Douglas J. DeBord, County Manager
From: Zach Burns, Fairgrounds Manager
Tim Hallmark, Director, Facilities, Fleet and Emergency Support Services
Subject: Fair & Rodeo Concert, Royalty Program, and Rodeo Event Addition

1. Saturday Night Rock Concert

Goal: Direction on preferred 2026 lineup and budget range.

Headliner Options Include:

Third Eye Blind · Collective Soul · Scott Stapp
(Support: Everclear · Fuel · Eve 6 · Better Than Ezra · The Wallflowers)

Key Decisions:

- Premium co-headline vs. single-headliner model

2. Royalty Program & Scholarship

Overview:

- Program administered by the Douglas County Fair Foundation.
- Focused on youth leadership and ambassadorship.

Proposal:

- \$10,000 annual County-funded scholarship
 - \$6,000 Queen / \$4,000 Attendant
- Paid directly to the educational institution

Key Decisions:

- Administrative structure (County vs. Foundation distribution)

- Ongoing funding commitment

3. Breakaway Roping Addition

Overview:

Women's timed event sanctioned by the Women's Professional Rodeo Association.

Considerations:

- Livestock & pen capacity constraints
- Possible Thursday-only integration
- Estimated annual cost: ~\$35,000

Key Decision:

- Direction to continue pursuing 2026 implementation planning
-

Desired Outcome: Clear policy guidance on concert selection, scholarship structure, and Breakaway Roping advancement.

Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Royalty Program Overview

The Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Royalty Program is a long-standing tradition administered by the **Douglas County Fair Foundation**. While the County provides annual funding through the Fair & Rodeo operating budget to support marketing and promotional efforts, the Royalty Program itself operates under the Fair Foundation, not directly under the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo.

The program is designed to develop young ambassadors who represent the Fair & Rodeo, the western industry, and Douglas County at community events, speaking engagements, and promotional appearances throughout the year.

Purpose of the Program

The Royalty Program is not designed as a financial opportunity. Its primary purpose is youth development through leadership, public speaking, and community representation. Serving as Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Royalty is viewed as an honor, not employment or community service.

Key benefits of the program include:

- High-value experience in public speaking, professional conduct, and leadership at a young age
- Meaningful community engagement and ambassadorship
- Continued connection to rodeo, agriculture, and the western industry

For many participants, the program serves as an alternative to traditional youth sports or extracurricular activities. Alumni often continue on to larger titles such as Miss Rodeo Colorado or Miss Rodeo America and regularly return to support the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo through volunteerism and mentorship. Participants consistently cite public speaking, leadership development, and personal growth as the most valuable outcomes of the program. Those who have interacted with current or past Royalty members have likely witnessed firsthand the professionalism, poise, and confidence that result from this experience.

Current County Support

In 2025, the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo operating budget allocated \$4,064 toward expenses associated with marketing and promotion of the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo. These expenses are coded to the Fair & Rodeo marketing budget.

These funds are intended to support Royalty members in their ambassadorial role and may include costs associated with:

- Autograph sheets and promotional materials
- Training clinics
- Ticketed events related to Fair & Rodeo promotion
- The annual Royalty luncheon

This support enables Royalty members to effectively represent the Fair & Rodeo and Douglas County across a wide range of public-facing opportunities.

Application & Selection Process

Applications for the Royalty Program open annually in May.

Outreach and recruitment efforts include:

- Flyers
- Social media, primarily Facebook
- Online applications

Applicants are provided with a study packet that includes basic horse knowledge and a study guide. This is intentionally designed as a starter program, and prior experience is not required.

Eligibility requirements include:

- Douglas County residency
- Princess division: ages 9-15
- Queen division: ages 16-23
- Natural-born female
- Access to a horse for events

Two practices are held in July, followed by a formal competition later that month. Applicants are evaluated by a minimum of two paid, professional judges (heavily involved in rodeo and/or queening organizations).

Evaluation criteria and weighting are as follows:

- 60% Horsemanship
 - Pattern work
 - Speed
 - Flag presentation
 - Control
- 40% Personality and Knowledge
 - Personal interview
 - Modeling
 - Prepared speech
 - Written knowledge test
 - Impromptu personal and rodeo questions

Applicants must achieve a minimum score of 70% of available points to be awarded a title.

The incoming Fair Royalty is officially announced at the Hometown Rodeo. The end of each Fair marks the conclusion of the previous Queen's term and the beginning of the next.

Traditions & Mementos

The Royalty crown and chaps are perpetual items and are not retained by individual participants. This tradition, common across Royalty programs, is similar to the Stanley Cup – passed from year to year, adding legacy, history, and significance to the role.

In lieu of keeping the crown, each Royalty participant receives:

- A custom commemorative bracelet featuring their name, title, and year of reign (approximately \$150)
- A custom commemorative buckle (approximately \$150)
- Sash with their title and year (\$45)

The Queen also receives a custom saddle valued at approximately \$2,400.

These items serve as meaningful, lasting mementos of service and can be used throughout participants' future involvement in the western industry.

Proposed \$10,000 Royalty Program Scholarship Structure

Funding: \$10,000 annual scholarship funded by Douglas County

Eligibility & Verification: Driver's license/ID to verify Douglas County residency at time of application.

Application Process: Scholarship application required at end of term. Reviewed and approved by Fair Foundation, Fair Board, and the County.

Administration: Clarify - Will the County be the distributing entity, or will payment be routed through the Fair Foundation?

Award Distribution

- Discontinue current FF awards (\$1,000 Queen, \$500 Queen Attendant)
- Replace with DC Scholarship: \$6,000 Queen, \$4,000 Queen Attendant

Payment Guidelines

- Require itemized invoice from educational institution
- Covers: tuition, books, class fees, trade school equipment (reimbursement), federal student loans
- Does NOT cover: housing, food, transportation, private student loans
- Payment schedule: Two semester disbursements
- Paid directly to institution

Statement from the Fair Foundation

From Debbie Mills:

“I wanted to share that the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Royalty Program is one of the few programs honored to have both the Sheriff and the Board of County Commissioners attend the annual Royalty luncheon. Many programs struggle not only for financial support, but for recognition of their efforts.

On behalf of Deb Dilley, Lauren Heaton, and myself, we greatly appreciate the kudos and tremendous financial support. We will continue to strive to maintain the level of professionalism and youth development that those associated with the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo have grown accustomed to seeing.”

Potential Addition of Women's Breakaway Roping

Background & Context

The BOCC has expressed interest in expanding female-specific rodeo opportunities within the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo. Currently, **Breakaway Roping** is the only women's-specific timed event under consideration for addition.

This document provides a brief overview of the event, outlines current efforts underway, and highlights key logistical and financial considerations.

What Is Breakaway Roping?

Breakaway roping is a fast-paced, timed event in which a mounted competitor ropes a calf. The rope is tied to the saddle horn with a string; when the calf hits the end of the rope, the string "breaks away," signaling the end of the run. The clock stops at the moment of release.

- It is one of the fastest rodeo events (typically 2-3 seconds).
- It is sanctioned by the Women's Professional Rodeo Association.
- It has seen significant national growth and increasing recognition at major rodeos.

Current Status

- The Rodeo Committee is actively working with the **WPRA** to identify a viable pathway for incorporating Breakaway Roping into our Rodeo.
- This event has been discussed within the Fair Board for several years.
- There is strong internal support and genuine desire to include it.
- The primary barriers are logistical – not philosophical.

Key Logistical Considerations

1. Livestock & Pen Capacity

- Adding Breakaway Roping requires additional calves and associated stock management.
- Our outdoor arena pen configuration is already operating beyond ideal capacity.
- Current infrastructure limits our ability to safely and efficiently accommodate additional livestock.

This constraint reinforces the importance of the Fairgrounds Master Plan. At present, we simply do not have the physical space required to grow responsibly while maintaining safety standards for animals, contestants, and staff.

2. Proposed Operational Solution (Under Review)

John Adams has identified a potential workaround:

- Incorporate Breakaway Roping into the **Thursday night Rough Stock performance only (16 total performance runs)**.
- Thursday provides available pen space during that performance window.

- We are currently working with the WPRA to determine whether a single-performance integration would meet their sanctioning and payout requirements.

3. Slack Adjustments

- The addition would require modifications to our Slack schedule.
- At this stage, staff believes these adjustments are manageable from an operational standpoint.

Financial Considerations

Preliminary estimate of annual impact: **~\$35,000 per year**

This includes:

- Increased purse requirements
- Additional stock contractor costs
- Associated operational expenses

Hard numbers are still being finalized pending discussions with the WPRA and contractor partners.

Discussion Points for BOCC

1. Is there support for pursuing this addition, contingent upon WPRA approval and operational feasibility?
2. Is there appetite to support the projected additional annual investment (~\$35,000)?
3. How does the Board view phased implementation (e.g., Thursday-only) as an interim solution?

Agenda Item

Date: March 3, 2026
To: Douglas County Board of County Commissioners
Through: Douglas J. DeBord, County Manager
From: Steve Shoultz, CPRE, Director of Parks and Recreation *SS*
CC: Luke Thornton, CPRP, Parks Program Coordinator
 Nick Giauque, CPRP, Parks Programs Manager
Subject: **2026 Celebration Partnership Opportunities**

SUMMARY

In 2025, the County contributed funding for community celebrations in Highlands Ranch, Perry Park, and Sterling Ranch, as well as drone shows at the Fair & Rodeo and on New Year’s Eve. The following are partnership funding requests received to date; others may be received later.

DISCUSSION

Highlands Ranch Fourth of July Fireworks – July 4, 2026

Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA) and Highlands Ranch Metro District (HRMD) requested \$24,850 in partnership funding for the Fourth of July fireworks display at Highland Heritage Regional Park (HHRP) in 2025. Additionally, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) granted HRCA a \$10,890 fee waiver for the HHRP rental. This year, HRCA and HRMD request a partnership contribution of \$24,250, one-third of the total \$72,750 for the fireworks. The table below illustrates each organization's contributions to the Highlands Ranch Fourth of July celebration.

Organization	Parade	Fireworks	Facility Fee Waiver	Total
HRCA	\$19,300	\$24,250		\$43,550*
Metro District	\$19,300	\$24,250		\$43,550*
Douglas County		\$24,250	\$10,890	\$35,140
Total	\$38,600	\$72,750	\$10,890	\$122,240

* The total excludes event staffing

Perry Park Fourth of July Fireworks – July 4, 2026

In 2025, the Perry Park Metropolitan District (PPMD) requested \$20,000 for their Fourth of July fireworks show, with a \$4,500 match. This year, PPMD is requesting \$25,000 in funding for a fireworks display with a \$3,500 match. The table below illustrates each organization's contributions to the Perry Park Fourth of July Fireworks.

Organization	Proposed Partner Contributions
Perry Park Metro District	\$3,500
Douglas County	\$25,000
Total	\$28,500

Sterling Ranch Fourth of July Festival Fireworks – July 4, 2026

In 2025, the Sterling Ranch Community Authority Board (Sterling Ranch CAB) is requesting \$5,000 in funding for its Fourth of July Festival fireworks display. The County partnered with the Sterling Ranch CAB for this event in 2025. The requested amount remains the same from 2025. The table below illustrates each organization's contributions to the Fourth of July Festival Fireworks.

Organization	Proposed Partner Contributions
Sterling Ranch CAB	\$30,000 (estimated)
Douglas County	\$5,000
Total	\$35,000

Douglas County Drone Shows

In 2025, the cost for the drone shows at the Fair & Rodeo and on New Year's Eve totaled \$116,000. Staff has worked with the drone vendor on a proposal for two shows in 2026. The vendor is proposing a budget similar to 2025 for both shows, with two changes.

1. Increasing the number of drones at the Fair & Rodeo from 400 drones to 1,000+ drones. The proposal aims to break the record for the largest drone show in the Front Range and, possibly, in the State of Colorado.
2. The New Year's Eve show would continue with a 400-500 drone capacity, with the option of presenting the show twice at no additional charge.

Staff will work with the Douglas County School District to potentially waive the rental fee for Echo Park Stadium. The anticipated cost for both drone shows is \$118,475. This price includes the costs for the Sheriff and DCSD stadium staff.

Summary of Requests and Total Cost

The following table shows the total expenditures for 2026 if the Board approves all current partnership funding requests and provides both drone shows.

Celebration	Requested County Contribution
Highlands Ranch Fourth of July Fireworks	\$35,140
Perry Park Fourth of July Fireworks	\$25,000
Sterling Ranch Fourth of July Fireworks	\$5,000
Douglas County Drone Shows	\$118,475
Total	\$183,615

NEXT STEPS

Staff is prepared to discuss the 2026 celebration partnership and drone show opportunities.

ATTACHMENTS

Highlands Ranch Fireworks Request 4
 Perry Park Request..... 5
 Sterling Ranch Fireworks Request..... 7
 UAV Pro Drone Show Guide 9

January 28, 2026

Doug DeBord, County Manager
Douglas County Government
100 Third Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

RE: Highlands Ranch 4th of July Fireworks

Dear Doug,

On behalf of the Boards of Directors for the Highlands Ranch Metro District (Metro District) and the Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA), we respectfully request financial support from Douglas County for the 2026 Highlands Ranch 4th of July Fireworks Event.

This annual event brings families and friends together to enjoy festivities that have become a hallmark of Highlands Ranch. As we continue our partnership in 2026, HRCA and the Metro District will once again collaborate on key Independence Day events, including the community parade and fireworks display.

The total estimated cost for these celebrations is \$111,350, in addition to staffing expenses. We are requesting financial support of \$24,850, which represents a third of the cost of the fireworks display. Additionally, we are seeking a fee waiver for the use of Highland Heritage Park for the duration of the fireworks event.

	Parade	Fireworks	Total
HRCA	\$19,300	\$24,250	\$43,550*
Metro District	\$19,300	\$24,250	\$43,550*
Douglas County		\$24,250	\$24,250
Total	\$38,600	\$72,750	\$111,350

**Does not include cost of event staffing*

The strong partnership between our organizations and Douglas County has been instrumental in making Highlands Ranch a premier community, known for its high-quality services, events, activities, and programs. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to discussing how we can continue working together to bring this cherished event to our community.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Stanley
General Manager
Highlands Ranch Metro District



Mike Bailey
General Manager
Highlands Ranch Community Association

cc: Metro District Board of Directors
HRCA Board of Directors



January 12, 2026

Mr. Doug DeBord
County Manager
Douglas County Government
100 Third Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

RE: Perry Park Independence Day Parade and Fireworks

Dear Mr. DeBord,

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Perry Park Metropolitan District (PPMD), we would like to request financial support from Douglas County for the 2026 Perry Park Independence Day Parade and Fireworks Celebration.

Independence Day is a time for the community to come together in celebration of pride in our community and our nation. The events are filled with fun traditions to share with family and friends, and we are pleased to have this opportunity to, once again, partner with Douglas County in this celebration!

Perry Park is a welcoming community and our Parade and Fireworks show has traditionally had involvement and cooperation from the Perry Park Metropolitan District board, the Perry Park Country Club, the Larkspur Fire Department, the Larkspur Volunteer Fire Auxiliary, the Parent Teacher Association of the Larkspur Elementary School, local businesses and realtors.

Our 2026 – Independence Day parade and related costs total an estimated \$5,000
Our 2025 – Independence Day fireworks display and related costs total an estimated \$23,500

(These costs do not include the costs or value of logistical and support staff.)

Total anticipated 2026 Independence Day event costs: \$28,500

The Perry Park community and our support organizations have had positive relations with Douglas County for many years, which makes Perry Park a popular and growing community with high quality services, events, activities and programs. Both the parade and fireworks draw in families from the greater Larkspur area and do not exclusively serve the people of Perry Park.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a large increase in the cost of fireworks this year of approximately 15% due to tariffs without the corresponding increase in our metro district's budget capacity. We are requesting financial support of \$25,000 for the Independence Day Fireworks and Parade activities.

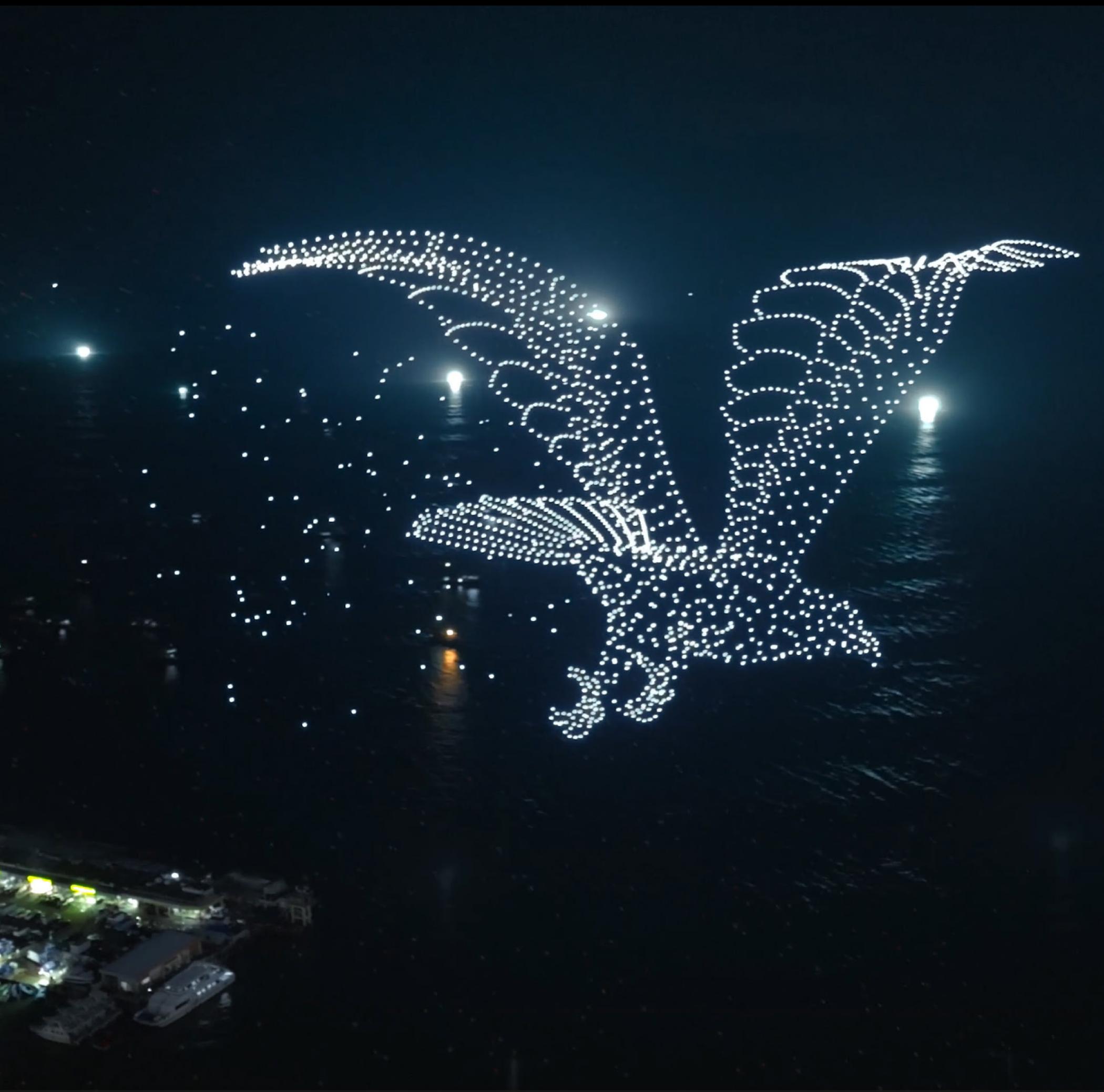
We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
Darren Hill
Darren Hill

Director / Events and Activities Committee Chair
Perry Park Metropolitan District
DarrenHill@PerryPark.org
(813) 713-0982

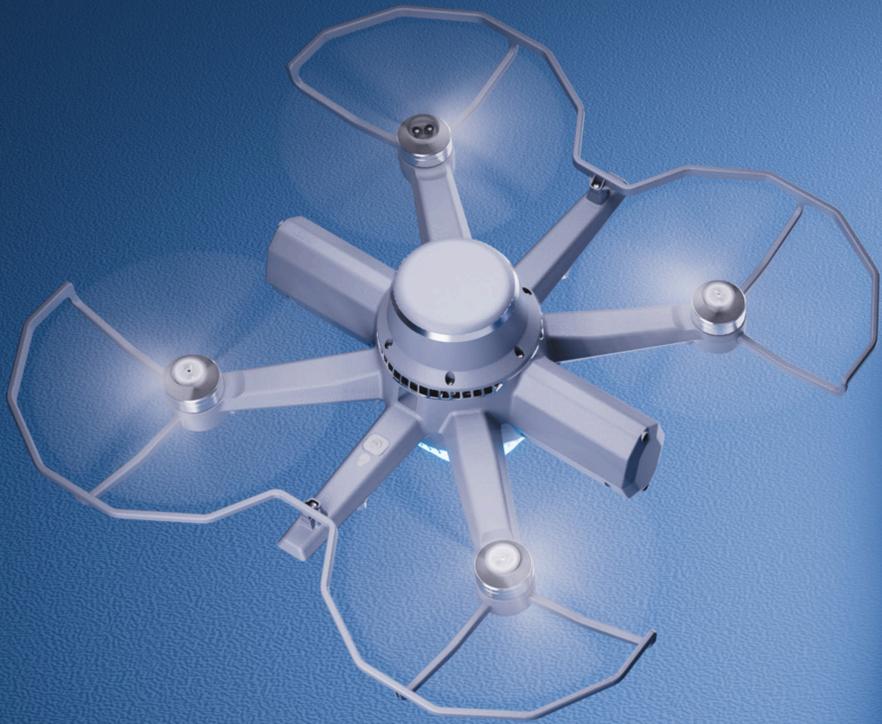
A New Era of Drone Entertainment

High-precision drone shows with next-gen safety systems and ultra-bright LED fleets built for large events



The Drone

The most advanced large-format drone system in the world, featuring 15-minute show lengths and rapid automatic recharging to launch again in 30 minutes.



Safety



The only drone in the world with a parachute system.

Accuracy



Millimeter-level accuracy and a drone healing system.

Power



Brightest LED light show drone on the market.

The Show

The best-in-class design and pilot team to create your visual epic and write it across the sky in perfect precision.



Design



Full creative design, from ideation to final safety checks, with motion matched perfectly to music or narration.

Deployment



Premier drone show team with years of experience in large-scale show deployment.

The Cost

Show sizes into the 1,000s with a second launch included for free.

One Night Show

<u>Drone Count</u>	<u>Max Show Length</u>	<u>Price</u>
300	16 minutes	\$37,000
500	16 minutes	\$53,000
750	16 minutes	\$70,000
1000	15 minutes	\$115,000
1500	15 minutes	\$155,000
2000	15 minutes	\$200,000

Multi-Night Show

<u>Drone Count</u>	<u>Additional Night Price</u>
300	\$12,000
500	\$16,000
750	\$20,000
1000	\$28,000
1500	\$41,000
2000	\$52,000

- Prices includes design and deployment, and covers FAA and insurance.
- Same night second launch is free (additional costs for changes in show design)
- Site fees and event-specific fees not included
- Additional nights must be consecutive

