



# 500 FESTIVAL ANNUAL REPORT



2026

A YEAR IN REVIEW





# 500 FESTIVAL

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| A Message from Leadership  | 2  |
| 500 Festival Mission       | 4  |
| Program and Event Partners | 6  |
| Board of Directors         | 7  |
| Economic Impact            | 8  |
| 500 Festival Foundation    | 10 |
| Education Program          | 12 |
| KidsFit Program            | 16 |
| Miler Series               | 20 |
| Kickoff to May             | 24 |
| Mini-Marathon & 5K         | 28 |
| Kids' Day                  | 32 |
| Rookie Run                 | 36 |
| Breakfast at the Brickyard | 40 |
| Memorial Service           | 44 |
| Parade                     | 48 |
| 250 & 500 Mile Challenge   | 52 |
| Princess Program           | 54 |
| Volunteer Program          | 58 |
| Corporate Member Program   | 60 |
| Intern Program             | 62 |
| Financials                 | 64 |

## A MESSAGE FROM

# 500 FESTIVAL LEADERSHIP

For 70 years, the 500 Festival's programs and events have been traditions that have brought people together, strengthened community connections, and celebrated the legacy of the Indianapolis 500. Through every milestone, our mission has remained the same: to enrich lives, make a positive impact on our community, and celebrate the spirit of the Indianapolis 500.

Throughout 2026, our annual theme "Racing Through History" came to life across more than 30 programs and events that connected people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. From the streets of downtown Indianapolis to classrooms across the state, the 500 Festival united neighbors, families, educators, local businesses, volunteers, and partners through shared experiences rooted in celebration, fitness and wellness, education, and community spirit.

This year's accomplishments highlighted the growing impact of our mission. Both the 50th Running of the IU Health 500 Festival Mini-Marathon and the Delta Dental 500 Festival 5K sold out with over 30,000 registered participants, reflecting the continued enthusiasm around fitness and iconic Indianapolis traditions.





The 500 Festival KidsFit Program reached record participation, engaging students across Indiana in opportunities to build confidence, teamwork and healthy habits. Together with our Education Program, we're reaching more than 45,000 students and empowering the next generation to learn, move and embrace healthy, active lifestyles.

The 70th Annual Lucas Oil 500 Festival Parade brought generations of Hoosiers and visitors together in downtown Indianapolis to celebrate one of the city's most cherished traditions. Filled with community pride, floats and balloons, entertainment, and INDYCAR drivers, the Parade once again showcased the energy and excitement that defines the month of May.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our volunteers, partners, sponsors, board directors, and staff. In addition to yours, their passion and dedication helped bring our mission to life and ensured that this milestone year was one to remember.

As you explore the stories and successes of this past year, we invite you to reflect on your own connection to the 500 Festival. Whether you participated in a race, attended an event, volunteered your time, or cheered from the sidelines, you helped us continue Racing Through History – together.

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, likely belonging to Dave Neff, the President &amp; CEO of the 500 Festival and 500 Festival Foundation.

**Dave Neff**, President & CEO, 500 Festival and 500 Festival Foundation



**THE MISSION** of the  
500 Festival is to produce  
**life-enriching** events and  
programs that celebrate  
the **spirit and legacy** of  
the Indianapolis 500 and  
foster a **positive impact**  
on the city of Indianapolis  
and the state of Indiana.

## PROGRAM AND EVENT

# PARTNERS

500 Festival Foundation  
 AES Indiana  
 American Dairy Association Indiana Inc.  
 Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield  
 Apex Benefits  
 Aqua Systems  
 ARI  
 Bose McKinney & Evans  
 Bridge Builder Strategies  
 Central Indiana Chevrolet Dealers  
 CHA  
 Chevrolet  
 Citizens Energy Group  
 Colt Moving Company  
 Current Publishing, LLC  
 Daniel's Vineyard  
 Delta Dental  
 DICK'S Sporting Goods  
 Elevance Health  
 Elevance Health Foundation  
 Eli Lilly and Company  
 Energy Harness Corporation  
 Enterprise  
 ERS Wireless  
 ETI FAB  
 First Financial Bank

Forvis Mazars  
 Franciscan Health  
 Frito Lay  
 Gatorade Endurance  
 Gatorade Energy Bars  
 HotBox Pizza  
 Ice Miller, LLP  
 Indiana University Health  
 Indianapolis Business Journal  
 Indianapolis Colts  
 Indianapolis Indians  
 Indianapolis Motor Speedway  
 Indianapolis Public Library  
 Indy Racing Experience  
 IU Health Simon Cancer Center  
 Jack and Debbie Goodpasture  
 JPMorganChase  
 Khamis Fine Jewelers  
 Kindling Snacks  
 Krieg DeVault LLP  
 KSM CPA's & Advisors  
 Lucas Oil  
 Markey's Rental & Staging  
 Marlyne Sexton  
 McDonald's  
 Meijer

Michelob ULTRA  
 Nameless Catering Co.  
 NTT Data IndyCar Series  
 OneAmerica Financial  
 OrthoIndy  
 Pacers Sports & Entertainment  
 Penske Truck Rental  
 Peyton Manning Children's Hospital  
 Planet Fitness  
 PNC Bank  
 Purdue University  
 Regions Bank  
 Republic Airways  
 Riley Children's Health  
 Rolls-Royce  
 Shell Starship  
 Sullivan Home & Garden  
 Susan G. Komen for the Cure  
 STAR Bank  
 The American Legion  
 The National Bank of Indianapolis  
 UnTapped  
 UPS  
 White River State Park  
 WISH-TV  
 WTHR  
 Zink Distributing

## 500 FESTIVAL

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025-2026



**Christina Moungey**  
Chair of the Board



**Roger Harvey**  
Vice Chair of the Board



**Bali Heir**  
Secretary of the Board



**Jeff Harrison**  
Treasurer of the Board



**Dr. Jim Callaghan**  
Immediate Past Chair

Doug Boles  
Scott Bove  
Travis Brown  
Patricio Daneri  
Brandi-Davis Handy  
Jason Eckerle  
Bowman Elder  
John F. Gause  
Troy Gilstorf  
Greg Goelzer

Jack Goodpasture  
Doug Heath  
Laurie Henry-Bradley  
Dr. Aleesia Johnson  
Larry Jones  
Tadd Miller  
Erik Miner  
JJ Nelson  
Nicole Paulk  
Ron Penczek

Ellen Saul  
Blake Schulz  
Erik Skjodt  
Angela Smith-Jones  
Kevin Speer  
Doug Talley  
Casse Tate  
Roger VanDerSnick  
Karen Woods

## 500 FESTIVAL FOUNDATION



**Nadine Givens**  
Chair of the Board



**Leslie Carter-Prall**  
Vice Chair of the Board

Bob Brody  
Doug Brown  
Ted Dickman  
Mike Harmless  
David Kosene

Connie Lund  
Scott Molander  
Dennis Murphy  
James Poore  
Natalie Roberts

Eric Rowland  
Zachary B. Scott  
Betty Stilwell  
Mike Strohl  
Scott Thiems  
Al Wurster

**Director Emeritus:** Mary Clare Broadbent, Cindy Simon Skjodt, Al Smith

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Since the 500 Festival's founding in 1957, we have had an estimated economic impact of **\$500 million** on the city of Indianapolis. A recent economic study of our events revealed an annual impact of **\$30 million**, including \$6 million of direct spending by out-of-state visitors.



**\$220M**

**FORCASTED  
10-YEAR  
ECONOMIC  
IMPACT**

**\$1M**

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL  
STATE & LOCAL  
TAXES GENERATED**

**200+**  
**ANNUAL JOBS BY  
500 FESTIVAL EVENTS**





# FOUNDATION

## DEDICATED TO ADVANCING THE MISSION OF THE 500 FESTIVAL

The 500 Festival Foundation is a fully charitable 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to advancing the mission of the 500 Festival: to enrich lives and positively impact Indiana communities through meaningful celebrations of the Indianapolis 500.

In 2026, as the 500 Festival celebrated its "Racing Through History" season and honored milestone events including the 50th Running of the IU Health 500 Festival Mini-Marathon and the 70th Annual Lucas Oil 500 Festival Parade, the Foundation continued to play a vital role in ensuring these traditions create lasting impact far beyond the month of May.





**\$25,982.83 RAISED  
THROUGH INDY MINI  
PARTICIPANTS TO FUEL THE  
FOUNDATION'S MISSION**

**25,700 STUDENTS  
INSPIRED THROUGH  
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

**19,288 STUDENTS  
ENCOURAGED TO LIVE  
HEALTHIER, MORE ACTIVE LIVES**

**33 PRINCESSES / FUTURE  
LEADERS SUPPORTED WITH  
\$51,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS**

Through the generosity of donors, sponsors, and community partners, the 500 Festival Foundation helped expand access to free education, youth wellness, and leadership development programs across Indiana. Their support ensures these opportunities remain accessible to students, schools, and families at no cost, helping communities throughout the state experience the spirit and values of the 500 Festival firsthand.

The Foundation remains committed to preserving cherished traditions while investing in the future of Indiana. Every contribution helps keep programs free, accessible, and impactful for people of all ages and backgrounds across the state.

Together, we are not only celebrating history — we are building the foundation for future generations to experience the spirit of May for years to come.

**MAKE AN IMPACT  
& GIVE TODAY**



**500 FESTIVAL**  
*Princess Presentation*

12

500 FESTIVAL & INDIANAPOLIS 500®



## EDUCATION PROGRAM

Presented by Riley Children's Health

## INSPIRING FUTURE FANS, PARTICIPANTS, AND LEADERS IN THE CLASSROOM

The Education Program extended the legacy of the 500 Festival and Indianapolis 500 to more than 25,700 fourth-grade students from 1,062 classrooms across Indiana, transforming one of the state's most iconic traditions into a hands-on learning experience.

Through engaging lessons aligned with Indiana academic standards, students explored topics ranging from the science and engineering behind an INDYCAR to the history of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

FOURTH GRADE  
Ridge Elementary



**1,062  
INDIANA  
CLASSROOMS**

For more than 7,783 students, the program's Study Trips provided an opportunity to experience the excitement of the month of May in a meaningful and memorable way, bringing classroom lessons to life at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS). For many, it was their first visit to IMS, creating a personal connection to one of Indiana's most iconic venues and helping inspire the next generation of fans, participants, and leaders.



For an additional 2,280 students, the Indianapolis 500 went directly to their classrooms through Mobile Trips. These interactive experiences extended the reach of the program across 40% of Indiana counties, deepening student connections to Indiana's racing tradition and inspiring them to see themselves as part of its future.



*"The program is so well organized and worth the time! The videos in the online portal are engaging and informational, hitting many academic standards. Going to IMS is something many Hoosier children may never experience, and something they cannot actually picture until they step foot in it. Seeing their eyes light up at the size of IMS brings learning to life in a way that just cannot happen in the classroom. My kiddos are Hoosiers, and now they understand and can share why racing is a part of who we are."*

**Megan Johnson**

2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year





Since its inception, the Education Program has reached more than 500,000 students, creating meaningful connections to Indiana's most celebrated tradition while inspiring curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.



**EXPLORE THE  
LEGACY THROUGH  
STUDENTS' EYES**

STUDY TRIPS



MOBILE TRIPS





## CONQUERING GOALS ONE MILE AT A TIME

The 500 Festival KidsFit Program continues to inspire healthy habits and active lifestyles among Hoosier youth through fun, engaging fitness opportunities aligned with Indiana's health and physical education standards.

In 2026, the program reached a historic milestone, with 110 schools and 19,288 students participating—the highest enrollment in KidsFit history. Through the "Start Your Engines" training plan, students walked or ran one mile each week, building endurance, confidence, and healthy habits while working toward a larger goal.

**19,228  
STUDENT  
PARTICIPANTS**



By the time they reached the finish line at the Delta Dental 500 Festival 5K, participants had completed a cumulative 13.1 miles, the distance of a half marathon. More than 800 participants celebrated their accomplishments in a dedicated KidsFit wave.





*"It's amazing to watch kids when they first start our training. That one little lap around the parking lot can be difficult, but with encouragement from their friends and teachers, they grow, and so do their stamina and passion. Seeing them out here today for their final run is so exciting because they get to experience that final moment and celebrate what they've accomplished."*

**Janette Moore**  
2026 KidsFit Principal





Through KidsFit, the 500 Festival continues to promote youth wellness while helping students develop lifelong habits of health, fitness, and perseverance.

**WATCH AS STUDENTS  
GAIN CONFIDENCE  
THROUGH RUNNING**





## PREPARING FOR MAY. ONE RACE AT A TIME.

Every fitness journey begins with a first step, and for 5,488 runners, walkers, and wheelers, the 500 Festival Miler Series, presented by OrthoIndy, gave them an opportunity to begin theirs.

Held in February, March, and April, the three-race training series brought participants together to prepare for the IU Health 500 Festival Mini-Marathon and their personal best that awaited them in May.

## 5,488 PARTICIPANTS

*Total number across the series.*





Through each race distance – 3 miles, 6 miles, and 10 miles – participants built their endurance, tested race-day gear, connected with vendors, gained a sense of community, and established routines.



For many participants, the Miler Series marked their first time tackling these distances. For others, one year becomes the start of a lasting tradition, bringing them back to continue their journey and encourage others along the way.

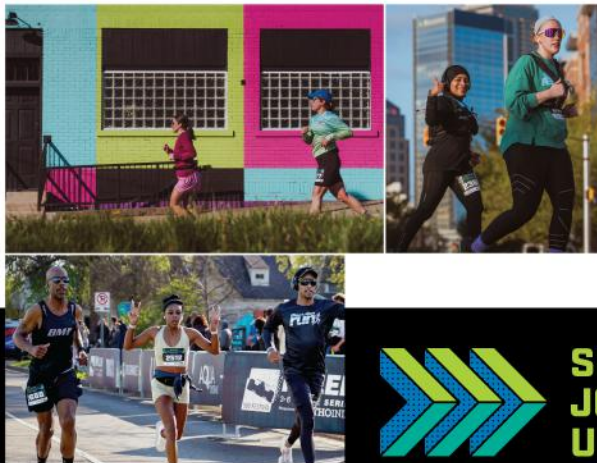


*"You get to meet so many amazing people. We met several participants along the way, and it was really fun getting to know them. We were all working toward the same goal, but each of us had our own unique journey and reason for being there."*

**Zachary Mackramer**

2025 and 2026 Miler Series participant





Regardless of experience level, the series offered something for everyone. For both seasoned runners and first-time participants, what began as a goal became an opportunity to train hard, build confidence, and celebrate their progress and accomplishments.



**SEE THEIR  
JOURNEYS  
UNFOLD**





## SETTING THE PACE FOR A MEMORABLE MONTH OF MAY

On April 29, the green flag waved, and the countdown to May officially began as the 500 Festival's Kickoff to May event launched another exciting Month of May in Indianapolis. More than 1,100 attendees came together to celebrate a tradition that continues to unite Hoosiers year after year.

Local sports and community leaders took the stage to share reflections on what makes Indianapolis a premier sports city. Their remarks highlighted the collective impact of iconic organizations and events, from the Indiana Pacers and Indianapolis Colts to the Indianapolis 500, and the role they all play in driving civic pride, economic vitality, and community connection across the state.



*"There's something special about May in Indiana. It's a month full of pride, tradition, and community with sports at the center. Our professional sports organizations have a collective commitment to unite Indy and elevate one another, understanding that we all win when one team or event shines. The global light that shines on our city for the month of May showcases that collective commitment in an incredible way."*

**Julie Roe Lach**

Executive Vice President of External Relations and Community Engagement at Pacers Sports & Entertainment



The event brought this year's theme, Racing Through History, to life as fans tested their racing knowledge through a series of 500 Festival and Indianapolis 500-themed trivia questions, culminating with a prize pack awarded to the winner.



In a playful nod, local mascots put student-built Soapbox Derby Mini Cars to the test in a spirited competition, highlighting the creativity and hands-on learning inspired by the 500 Festival & Indianapolis 500 Education Program. Bandit, the Fishers Freight mascot, took home the title.



Monument Circle came alive with energy, celebration, and the community spirit that has defined the month of May for generations, bringing Hoosiers together to kick off another unforgettable season of traditions and memories.

**RELIVE  
KICKOFF  
TO MAY**





INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH

**MINI  
MARATHON**

DELTA DENTAL

**5K**

## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE MINI-MARATHON

The IU Health 500 Festival Mini-Marathon celebrated its historic 50th Running in 2026, marking five decades of inspiring individuals to challenge themselves and experience The Greatest Spectacle in Running®. The milestone year generated record excitement, with both the Mini-Marathon and Delta Dental 500 Festival 5K selling out before race day. More than 30,000 participants – including 26,746 Mini-Marathon participants and 5,966 5K participants from all 50 states and 27 countries – joined this landmark celebration of one of Indiana's most iconic traditions.



Mini-Marathon  
MAY 2, 2026  
13.1 MI  
RUNNING SINCE 1972  
**WRIGHT**  
123  
50th MINI-MARATHON

**50<sup>TH</sup>** RUNNING  
**MINI-MARATHON**

**30,000+  
PARTICIPANTS**



From the excitement of the start line to the iconic lap around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the finish in downtown Indianapolis, the 50th Running of the IU Health 500 Festival Mini-Marathon delivered an unforgettable race-day experience. Thousands of spectators, volunteers, and entertainment acts energized participants along the course, while elite athletes delivered standout performances.



Recognized as the #1 Best Half Marathon for the fourth consecutive year and the #2 Best 5K by USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards, Indy Mini Weekend continues to bring people together through fitness, achievement, and the spirit of the month of May, building on a tradition that has inspired generations.



## Meet the inspirational Tyler Nichols

*When Tyler Nichols was challenged by his brother to complete his own Mini-Marathon while receiving treatment at Riley Hospital for Children, he didn't hesitate. "Once I'm set on something," Tyler said, "I'm not going to stop until it's over." With his mom by his side pushing his IV pole through the hospital hallways, the pair tracked each lap on Tyler's hospital room door until all 13.1 miles were complete. Along the way, doctors and caregivers cheered him on, and Tyler's determination inspired other Riley patients to get moving as well. His story is a powerful reminder that the spirit of the Mini-Marathon extends far beyond the race course and brings hope, resilience, and encouragement to people wherever they are.*



The impact of Indy Mini Weekend extends far beyond the 13.1-mile course. From training programs and workplace challenges to fundraising initiatives and enhanced race-day experiences, these programs help make Indy Mini Weekend an unforgettable experience for participants of all ages and abilities.



**THE GOLD MILE**



**MINI WITH A MEANING**



**ELEVATED RUNNING AND PACING**



**INDY MINI AMBASSADORS**

**WATCH  
RACE DAY  
MOMENTS**

**INDY MINI EXPO**



**RACE DAY**





JPMorganChase 500 FESTIVAL

**KIDS' DAY**

**INSPIRING THE NEXT  
GENERATION THROUGH  
EXPLORATION & PLAY**

Hoosier traditions continued in the heart of downtown Indianapolis as Indiana's largest free outdoor festival just for kids welcomed 5,000 attendees from across the state for a day filled with adventure, learning, fitness, and imagination. Excitement filled the streets as children arrived ready to explore and try new things on a day made just for them.



Designed to inspire healthy lifestyles, curiosity, and creativity, the streets were transformed into interactive spaces featuring bounce houses, climbing walls, football tosses, basketball hoops, and hands-on activities, crafts, games, and more. The event featured more than 62 community partners and 85 activations, creating a full day of hands-on learning experiences for children.



**5,000  
ATTENDEES**

**62  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS**

**85  
ACTIVITIES**



*"Kids' Day is an event that brings the community together in the best way. It gave our family a chance to step away from our daily grind and enjoy being with one another. It was so fun watching all the children laugh, explore, learn, and make memories. Attending this event made our May."*

**Matt C.**

Kids' Day Attendee





The event offered something for every age and ability, providing free, meaningful access to experiences that sparked joy and learning. Across every intersection of Monument Circle, children were challenging themselves in new ways, showing off their proud smiles, and creating memories that would last a lifetime.

**EXPERIENCE  
KIDS' DAY**





# ROOKIE RUN

Presented by **Peyton Manning**  
Children's Hospital

**SUPPORTING YOUNG  
RUNNERS AS THEY BE  
BRAVE, CHASE DREAMS,  
AND CRUSH GOALS.**

At the center of Kids' Day was one of the day's most anticipated moments for children ages 3-10 – the Rookie Run. Over 1,070 young participants experienced the excitement of their very own race day moments in downtown Indianapolis.



**1,070+  
YOUNG PARTICIPANTS**



For many children, this was their first time standing at the start line. Nerves were high, and smiles were wide as the green flag waved. Then their confidence began to shine. Family and friends cheered them on, and big smiles came across their faces.



The best moment arrived as they crossed that finish line, grabbed their medal, and wore it with pride. Goal set. Met. And Rookie Run conquered! These moments happened with every age group and with every wave start.

We were thrilled to bring back a special moment to the Rookie Run: a pediatric fun run celebrating Peyton Manning Children's Hospital's patient ambassadors. These inspiring kids reminded us what true strength looks like.





The Rookie Run is not only an introduction to confidence and the joy of setting a goal and achieving it, but about being a part of the month of May traditions in Indianapolis.

**WATCH THESE  
MOMENTS UNFOLD**





## A MORNING OF LEADERSHIP, MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS, AND CONNECTION

A time-honored Hoosier tradition, Breakfast at the Brickyard brought together 80+ Indiana mayors, community leaders, business professionals, race fans, board directors, and the 33 500 Festival Princesses at the iconic Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Interest in the beloved event reached new heights with tickets selling out well ahead of Indy 500 Qualifications weekend.

**80+ MAYORS**

**33 PRINCESSES**

**1 ICONIC VENUE**



This year's program featured an engaging conversation with two leaders who help bring the month of May traditions to life: Dave Neff, President and CEO of the 500 Festival, and Michael Good, President of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum. The discussion focused on how these two organizations are united by a shared purpose — to honor, preserve, and elevate one of the most iconic traditions in motorsports in the Indy community — and how they're brought together to strengthen the impact, legacy, and future while inspiring the next generation of fans.





A legendary Milk Toast featured Indy 500 Champion Alex Palou and three-time winner Johnny Rutherford.



*"Winning the 2025 Indianapolis 500 was an absolute dream and celebrating with the iconic traditions, especially the milk celebration, was an honor I'll never forget. So even from afar, let's all raise our glasses together. Here's to fast laps, safe qualifying for the 2026 Indianapolis 500, and to the spirit of the May at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway."*

### **Alex Palou**

2025 Indianapolis 500 Champion  
Virtual remarks at event





To close out the event, Hailey Ready was announced as the 2026 500 Festival Queen Scholar! Hailey's academic achievement, leadership, and commitment to service exemplify the values of the 500 Festival Princess Program.



**SEE INDIANA'S  
LEADERS  
IN ACTION**





AMERICAN LEGION  
**MEMORIAL  
SERVICE**

## **HONORING AND REMEMBERING THOSE WHO GAVE EVERYTHING**

Over Memorial Day weekend, the American Legion 500 Festival Memorial Service brought together service members, veterans, Gold Star families, community leaders, and citizens to honor the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country and to remember the enduring legacy of their courage.



The ceremony featured the joint service color guard, performances by the Capital City Chorus and the Indiana National Guard's 38th Infantry Division Band, and keynote remarks from Lieutenant General Jonathan Stubbs, whose words served as a poignant reminder of the courage, dedication, and selflessness of our nation's fallen heroes.



A wreath-laying ceremony, horse-drawn caisson presentation, Marine Corps rifle salute, the playing of "Taps," and a breathtaking military flyover each provided moments of reflection and remembrance. 40 Gold Star families joined Indiana Governor Mike Braun, Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, members of the Armed Forces, the 500 Festival Board of Directors, and other dignitaries in paying tribute to those whose sacrifices continue to inspire generations.



*"So, the challenge for us is very simple as Americans. It may mean something different and it should to each of us because it's not just about wearing the uniform. Regardless of whether you wear the uniform as a service member, a first responder, a teacher in the classroom, a nurse in the hospital, or a farmer in the field. We all have a duty, responsibility, and an obligation to earn it every day. We should look to one another as Americans and we should say, 'Earn it.'"*

**Lieutenant General Jonathan Stubbs**  
2026 Memorial Service Keynote Speaker



As one of the most meaningful traditions of the month of May, the Memorial Service remains a cornerstone of the 500 Festival's mission to remember, honor, and unite the community in gratitude.



**REMEMBER.  
REFLECT. HONOR.**





**LUCAS OIL. 500 FESTIVAL  
PARADE**

**BRINGING GENERATIONS  
TOGETHER TO  
CELEBRATE TRADITION  
AND CREATE MEMORIES**

More than 200,000 attendees filled the streets of downtown Indianapolis for the 70th Annual Lucas Oil 500 Festival Parade, one of Indiana's most beloved traditions. This year's theme, Racing Through History, honored the people, moments, and milestones that have shaped Indianapolis' rich motorsports legacy while celebrating seven decades of parade history.

**200,000+  
ATTENDEES**

**RACING THROUGH  
HISTORY**



The National Anthem, performed by vocalist Loren Allred alongside the Indiana National Guard and the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, provided a powerful and patriotic start to the morning. The celebration continued with a high-energy opening production featuring Ephraim Owens, the Indiana Pacemates, and the Indianapolis Colts Cheerleaders, whose performance of "Don't Stop Believin'" energized the crowd and set the tone for the festivities ahead.



*"This year's 500 Festival experience was incredible from start to finish. Growing up, I attended these events as a fan, but being part of them gave me a whole new appreciation for the people behind the scenes who make everything happen. The communication, hospitality, production, and overall experience were first-class, and there was a genuine energy around the Mini, the Parade, and the Month of May that was exciting to be part of. I walked away feeling honored, grateful, and proud to be part of something that means so much to Indiana."*

### **Ephraim Owens**

Opening Production Performer

Fans lined the route as 32 INDYCAR drivers made their way through downtown alongside 13 marching bands, 4 giant balloons, and 11 spectacular floats. Community groups, cultural organizations, and local favorites added to the excitement, showcasing the spirit, creativity, and diversity that make Indiana unique.

**32  
INDYCAR DRIVERS**

**13  
MARCHING BANDS**

**4  
GIANT BALLOONS**

**11  
SPECTACULAR FLOATS**





As the final major event before the Indy 500, the Lucas Oil 500 Festival Parade brought together residents and visitors in a shared celebration of tradition, community, and the enduring magic of the month of May. For 70 years, the Parade has connected generations through unforgettable moments, and this year's event was no exception.

**RELIVE THE  
CELEBRATION**





## INSPIRING HEALTH & FITNESS BEYOND MAY

The 250- and 500-Mile virtual challenges bring the month of May energy into the summer, encouraging participants to embrace healthy, active lifestyles, and work toward completing 250 or 500 miles of physical activity in whatever way works best for them – running, walking, cycling, wheeling, swimming, hiking, and more. This year, 811 dedicated participants accepted the challenge.

**811  
PARTICIPANTS**





Much like the Indianapolis 500 itself, these challenges celebrate endurance and dedication. The Indianapolis 500 Mile Challenge and Gasoline Alley® 250 Mile Challenge continue to inspire participants to stay active, set goals, and discover what they're capable of.



**500 FESTIVAL  
PRINCESS  
PROGRAM**

Presented by  THE NATIONAL  
BANK OF INDIANAPOLIS

## **SERVING AS AMBASSADORS FOR THE 500 FESTIVAL & INDY 500**

The 500 Festival Princess Program continues to develop and celebrate Indiana's next generation of leaders. Each year, 33 outstanding college-aged women are selected to serve as 500 Festival Princesses, representing the values of scholarship, leadership, community service, and civic engagement throughout the month of May and beyond.

**33  
PRINCESSES**

**2,500+  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE HOURS**



Representing 19 colleges and universities and 21 communities across Indiana, the 2026 class exemplified excellence both academically and personally. The Princesses dedicated more than 2,500 hours of community service, supporting schools, hospitals, nonprofits, and 500 Festival events throughout the state.



*"From celebrating someone's 90th race to explaining what the Indy 500 even was, I loved getting to uniquely connect with so many Hoosiers from across the state. The experience helped me grow personally, professionally, and – something I didn't know was possible – I grew to love the Indy 500, INDYCAR, and Indianapolis even more than I already did."*

### **Hailey Ready**

2026 500 Festival Queen Scholar





The impact of the 500 Festival Princesses extends far beyond a single season, reflecting the program's mission to cultivate engaged leaders who will continue to make a difference in their communities for years to come.

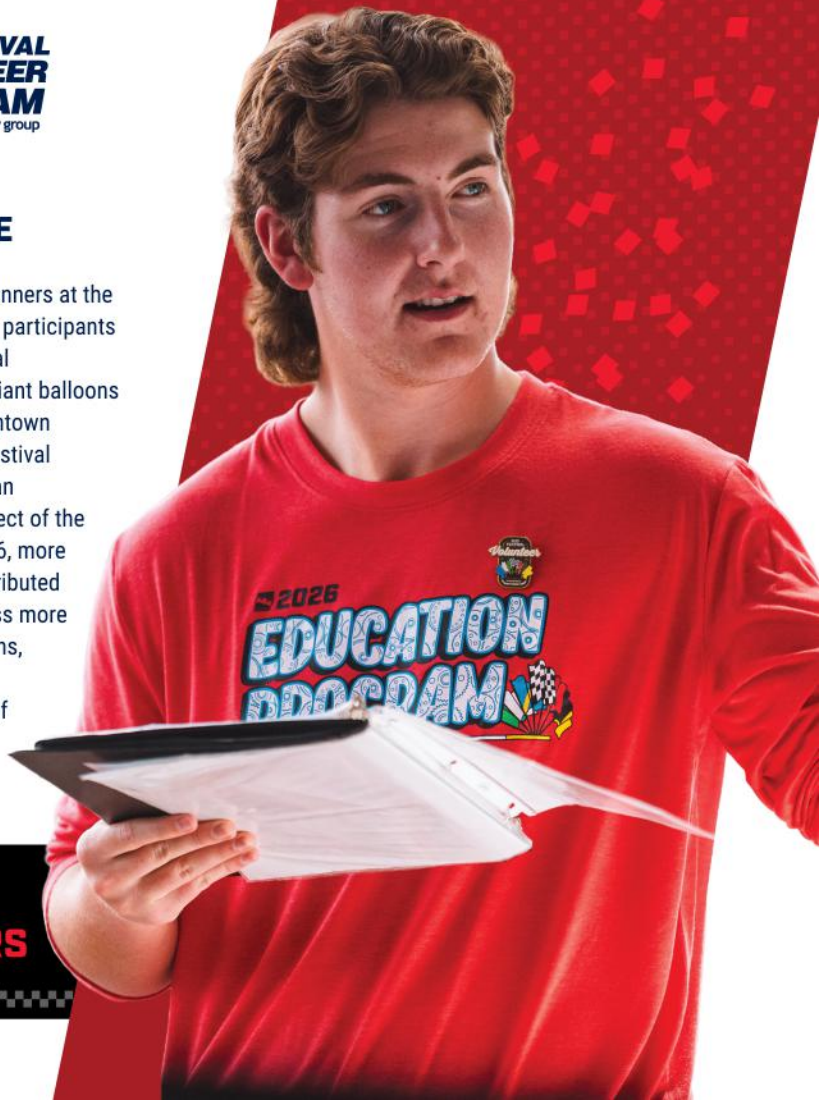




## BRINGING OUR MISSION TO LIFE

From encouraging young runners at the Rookie Run and supporting participants at the IU Health 500 Festival Mini-Marathon to guiding giant balloons through the streets of downtown during the Lucas Oil 500 Festival Parade, volunteers played an important role in every aspect of the Festival experience. In 2026, more than 2,730 volunteers contributed their time and talents across more than 30 events and programs, helping create meaningful experiences for hundreds of thousands of participants, spectators, and families.

**2,730  
VOLUNTEERS**



*"I started volunteering for the Parade in the early '70s, helping my aunt and uncle sell programs. I became a full-time volunteer in 1987, and keep coming back to see the kids' faces light up as they watch the spectacle, the camaraderie with long-term friends, and the race-morning rush at the track where I get the opportunity to coordinate the INDYCAR drivers. Giving back is in my blood, and I love how each year is a little different and brings different challenges."*

**Al Wurster**

Long-time Parade Volunteer



Their service strengthens our community, advances our mission, and exemplifies the spirit of connection and generosity that makes the 500 Festival possible. We are deeply grateful for the thousands of individuals who help bring the magic of May to life year after year.



## **CORPORATE MEMBER PROGRAM**

### **ENGAGING WITH INDIANA'S MOST CELEBRATED TRADITIONS**

The Corporate Member Program provides organizations with a unique opportunity to support the 500 Festival's mission while having meaningful opportunities for professional development, networking, and collaboration throughout the year.

In 2026, more than 125 companies participated in the program, leveraging exclusive experiences, hospitality opportunities, and event access to strengthen relationships with employees, clients, and community partners.

**125+  
COMPANIES**



This year's programming included a special event at Lucas Oil headquarters, where Corporate Members heard from industry leaders Dave Neff, Katie Lucas, and Allison Melangton. The discussion offered valuable insights on leadership, innovation, community engagement, and building successful organizations, while providing attendees with meaningful opportunities to connect and learn from some of Indiana's most respected business and civic leaders.



Corporate members help ensure that the traditions, experiences, and impact of the 500 Festival continue to inspire and connect people across Indiana and beyond.

**SEE A CORPORATE  
MEMBER EVENT  
IN ACTION**





## GAINING REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Working across event operations, marketing, communications, partnership development, and community engagement, 500 Festival interns gained firsthand experience supporting the planning and execution of the 500 Festival's year-round programs and signature month of May events.

In 2026, 12 talented students representing 11 colleges and universities from across the country joined the organization. Beyond professional experience, the program offers mentorship, networking opportunities, and real-world learning that prepares students for future careers.

**12  
TALENTED  
STUDENTS**



*"My internship with the 500 Festival was an invaluable experience. Beyond the growth I achieved in my professional skillset, I was deeply moved by the joy our events fostered within the community and the profound impact of our programs. I am incredibly grateful for the trust placed in the intern team and the opportunity to be part of such a dedicated team, positively impacting the community of Indianapolis and beyond."*

**Sarah Bambrick**

2026 Digital Marketing Intern



## 500 FESTIVAL

# FINANCIALS

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, the 500 Festival reported revenues exceeding \$7.8 million and welcomed nearly 500,000 Hoosiers to more than 30 programs and events during its milestone "Racing Through History" season. From the 50th Running of the IU Health 500 Festival Mini-Marathon to the 70th Annual Lucas Oil 500 Festival Parade, this year's celebrations reflected both the strength of our traditions and the growing impact of our mission statewide.

Our work continues to be driven by a dedicated team of 18 full-time staff members, supported by 12 interns, 33 board directors, and 21 foundation board directors whose leadership and commitment help bring the spirit of May to communities across Indiana.

This strong financial performance reflects continued organizational growth, diversified revenue streams, and a commitment to operational excellence while maintaining the high-quality experiences and meaningful community programs that define the 500 Festival.

## 40 PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



## 18 FULL-TIME STAFF



## 12 INTERNS



## 33 BOARD DIRECTORS



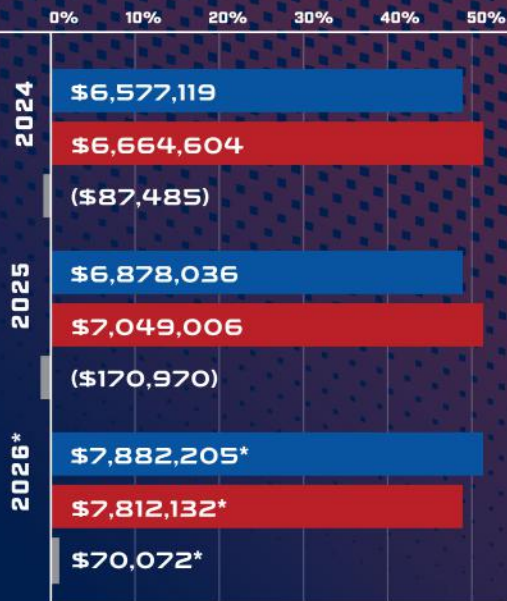
## 21 FOUNDATION BOARD DIRECTORS



Looking ahead, the 500 Festival remains focused on expanding its reach and deepening its impact, particularly within diverse and underserved communities throughout the state. With continued support from the 500 Festival Foundation, we are able to sustain and grow free, high-impact education, wellness, and leadership development programs that serve Hoosiers of all ages and backgrounds.

Built on a strong financial foundation and guided by a mission rooted in community connection, the 500 Festival is well-positioned to continue Racing Through History while creating meaningful experiences and opportunities for generations to come.

## EXPENSES VS. REVENUES



REVENUE

EXPENSES

OPERATING INCOME

*\*Forecasted*



TRAINED FOR IT. COME CRACKER FLAG FINISH

INDIANAPOLIS IN

500 FESTIVAL

500 FESTIVAL

HSH FINISH





# ***500 FESTIVAL***

**500FESTIVAL.COM**

**500FESTIVALFOUNDATION.COM**

**INDYMINI.COM**