



News Release

For Immediate Release

Jennifer L. Morgan
Media Contact
813-752-9194

jennifer@flstrawberryfestival.com

Festival elects two new directors and two new associate directors

PLANT CITY, Fla. (June 20, 2022) – The Florida Strawberry Festival board of directors recently voted to elect its newest directors, Lane Wetherington and Rick Lott, and associate directors, Alan Kicklighter and Stephanie Shuff.

The 11-day event’s board of directors is comprised of 16 directors and 14 associate directors. New associate directors are elected by the board from a group of nominated candidates, and directors are selected from the current group of associate directors.

“The number of nominees was outstanding,” said Florida Strawberry Festival Chairman of the Board Phil Waldron. “We look forward to welcoming the newest associates to our Festival family.”

Wetherington has served as an associate director for 17 years. He has been part of numerous festival committees including the swine committee, steer committee, stadium operations committee and Strawberry Ball committee. He has also volunteered as a bid collector for the Festival’s livestock shows for more than 20 years.

“The Florida Strawberry Festival has always been a part of my life,” said Wetherington. “I grew up on the Festival grounds as a child when my parents were volunteering out there. I love the Florida Strawberry Festival and it shows.”

Lott has volunteered as an associate director since 2006. He has been a member of the public relations committee and is chairman of the long-range planning committee. He spearheaded the Grimes Family Agricultural Center brick campaign in 2012 and served 11 years as Mayor of the City of Plant City. He and his wife, Di, have four children.

“The Festival is a multigenerational tradition steeped in the culture and character of our city,” said Lott. “We work hard to maintain the beloved traditions of the past as we move forward into the bright future.”

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Kicklighter is a native of Plant City and is president of CIF Distributing. He began volunteering at the Festival as a member of the stadium operations crew and roving ambassador and has assisted with construction, set up, and décor for the Strawberry Ball. He is an elder at Evangelical Presbyterian Church and serves as a Rotary Club member. He and his wife, Dawn, have five children and two grandchildren.

“I am honored to be a part of a group preceded by William Vernon, Terry Ballard, and Floyd Hall, just to name a few,” said Kicklighter. “Their vision set the standard for what the Florida Strawberry Festival is all about.”

Shuff is a retired elementary and middle school teacher turned author. She is the creator and writer of SoakinguptheSon.com, a faith-based, Christian website and blog and is a member of First Baptist Church of Plant City. She has been volunteering at the Festival for more than 20 years, serving as a tour guide, fashion show greeter, emcee of the baby contest, an information booth attendant and is co-chairperson of the tram operations committee. She and her husband, Tim, have three children.

“I am looking forward to continuing to enhance our Festival’s rich agricultural and family-friendly culture,” said Shuff. “Sharing our hometown traditions with others through grace, passion, and integrity is at the heart of this Festival.”

About the Florida Strawberry Festival

The Florida Strawberry Festival is an 11-day community event celebrating the strawberry harvest of Eastern Hillsborough County. Each year, over 500,000 visitors enjoy the festival’s headline entertainment, youth livestock shows, exhibits of commerce and, of course, its strawberry shortcake. The 2023 Florida Strawberry Festival will take place March 2 through March 12 in Plant City, Fla. For more information, visit www.flstrawberryfestival.com, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter ([#berryfest23](https://twitter.com/berryfest23)).

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