Fairgrounds deliver a sleigh full of festivities

The holiday spirit abounds at the Lane County Fairgrounds

By Felicity Ayles Oregon Daily Emerald

'Tis the season at the Lane County Fairgrounds.

The fairgrounds are home to a variety of celebratory events this holiday season, including the Saturday Market's Holiday Market. Celebration of Lights, Breakfast with Santa and Broadway on Ice.

Organizers for the Saturday Market move their operation indoors during the holiday season and rename it the Holiday Market.

Market general manager Bill Goldsmith said the main benefit of the Holiday Market is that it is inside and much warmer than the Saturday Market

'We used to hold the Saturday Market outside, but everyone decided it was too cold and wet, so we moved inside," Goldsmith said. "Nothing was quite as warm as the fairgrounds.'

But Goldsmith said customers can expect to see a few more vendors at the 11th annual Holiday Market than at the Saturday Market. "There are over 400 vendors participating this year, with about 325 at any given time," he said.

The fairgrounds provide a more comfortable venue for the customers and acceptable place for people to see all the goods being sold, Goldsmith said. He also stressed the importance of the market for the vendors themselves.

"A lot of a vendor's income comes during the holiday season,' he said. The market gives vendors from all over Lane County the opportunity to sell their goods.

The market is open to everyone in the community free of charge.

"The market recognizes the diversity of Eugene, so this is not a Christmas fair," Goldsmith said. Because the common thread in most holiday events is gift-giving, the fair can satisfy most people's shopping needs.

The market is family-based and will include a holiday courtyard with pony rides and apple cider,

Goldsmith said the market is usually quite busy around the holiday season. "People really do support their local producers," he said.

The market began Saturday and will run Dec. 12 and 13 and the week of Dec. 19 through 24

The third annual Celebration of Lights is another popular attraction at the fairgrounds this holiday season. The celebration consists of a drive-through light show featuring the 12 days of Christmas, Lane County Fair Board member Kathee McDermott said.

'Some of the displays are extremely large, up to 40 feet tall." McDermott said.

The Celebration of Lights is free of charge, but donations will be accepted to help support the youth programs that practice at the fairgrounds. The show will be open through New Year's Eve.

Breakfast with Santa started Saturday and will continue on Dec. 12 and 19. The breakfast includes a drawing for a 4-foot stuffed stocking and a goody bag for every

In addition to this holiday fare, ice skaters from Lane County will perform in "Broadway on Ice" at the fairgrounds' ice rink on Dec. 19.

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