

Oregon Women for Ag help make Expo a success

By GEOFF PARKS
For the Capital Press

Volunteers such as those from the Oregon Women for Agriculture are important cogs in the machinery of the Willamette Valley Ag Expo.

They allow the event to run smoothly each year by volunteering hundreds of hours of work setting up the show and making sure guests know where to go and what's offered.

Jessica Jansen has been a member of the OWA for six years and helps oversee her organization's presence at the Ag Expo.

The OWA acts as "general support for the Expo," she said, adding that it "is a great event for us to do each year."

"OWA volunteers (up to 20 or more each year) act as our welcoming com-



Courtesy Photo

Oregon Women for Agriculture member Tami Kerr is pictured at the organization's booth.

mittee, provide guests with refreshments and many other tasks," said Jill Ingalls, Expo producer. "They are more like partners than just volunteer workers."

Jansen is also executive

director of the Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, which is "dedicated to helping students grow in their knowledge of agriculture."

She said the program's



WVAE

The Oregon Women for Agriculture booth is in the foyer of the Ag Expo.

mission relates well to the goals of the 19-year-old Ag Expo, as does the stated mission of the OWA.

Both the program she directs and the OWA "connect the story of today's agri-

culture" to all Oregonians through events such as the three-day Ag Expo, which this year is Nov. 12-14 at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center in Albany.

In addition to staffing

the OWA booth at the Expo — it's the first booth guests encounter as they enter the main doors — OWA volunteers provide guests with important information.

They hand out programs, provide directions and refreshments to guests and give out information on the Dine Around Oregon event, antique farm equipment display and other highlights of the Expo.

The only pay the OWA volunteers receive is indirect: Members are free to provide information on and recruit new members for the OWA.

The Expo also helps sponsors the OWA's annual auction each year, one of the biggest fundraising efforts for the nonprofit group.

"(OWA members) are always happy to be there for the show," Jansen said.

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