



19th Annual
da Vinci days 2007
July 20-22
Corvallis, OR

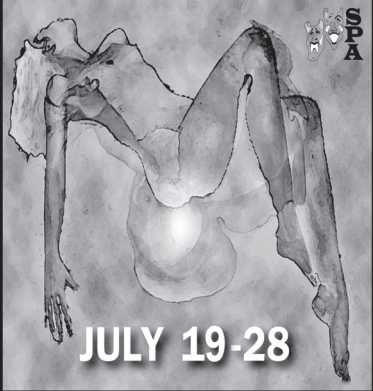
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OREGON COUNTRY FAIR 2007

MINDY SANDFORD

Mindy Sandford, the city of Veneta's Accounting Clerk, has coordinated Zumwalt Campground for ten years. Zumwalt is Veneta's city-sponsored campground, where up to 1200 campers stake out sleeping spots during fair weekend. "There were some bad times for the community before camping was allowed," Sandford says, "so the city jumped in fifteen years ago and started doing this to help with the impact because there are so many people coming in with nowhere to go." Zumwalt opens Thursday afternoon and closes at noon on Sunday. Sandford coordinates all the basic needs like toilets and water. She also oversees two food vendors, 24-hour security, portable showers, nightly entertainment for the campers and a shuttle running back and forth from the campground to the fair site.

Sandford has been going to fair ever since it was called the Renaissance Fair. She started taking her 26-year-old daughter when her daughter was 5 and has attended every year since then. "I don't always get as much time at fair now since I've been doing the campground," she laments. But you can see her every weekend at Zumwalt, making sure everything stays all good. "We try to work real closely with fair and ease the impact, and make sure everything runs smoothly for the weekend," she says.



TODD COOPER



TODD COOPER

RICK INGRAM

Veneta was incorporated as a city in 1962, and the fair came along shortly after. Since then, the city's fate has been intertwined for better or for worse with the fair and its thousands of fairgoers. For three years Rick Ingram has been

Veneta's City Administrator and has grown to love the fair since relocating to the Willamette Valley from central Oregon. As Veneta's chief administrator, Ingram partners with the fair to deal with some of the issues that have an impact on the tiny community. Over the years, Veneta and the fair have taken on joint projects, like access issues off the state highway, wastewater disposal issues and wetland protection. "There is a lot of value in working off of each other's strength," Ingram says. Future joint projects include a small business entrepreneur program and recreational issues, including hiking trails. Ingram sees the fair's many artists as a valuable resource to help Veneta expand its small-business economy. "Most successful communities are growing their own," meaning small businesses, he says, and he thinks the fair can play an important role in that prosperity.

"The challenge [the fair organizers] have is that they create a fairly substantial city when the fair is up and going," he says. "We will continue to try to explore ways to help them operate that small city from a public safety, public health standpoint. We continue to help each other evolve."



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