

# A Walk to Remember

NEW LOOP DEBUTS AT OREGON COUNTRY FAIR BY STACEY M. HOLLIS

The Oregon Country Fair is debuting a new addition: This year revelers can stroll along on the maiden voyage of a new loop that veers off through an as-yet-virginal section of the forested fairgrounds. "It's taken a huge amount of work to put in the new loop," OCF General Manager Charlie Ruff says. "We've been looking at areas to develop new paths for many years."

In addition to alleviating congestion as visitors make their way through the Fair's labyrinthine network of trails to areas such as the Upper River Loop and Wooten Way, the loop promises to carry a special appeal for the younger crowd. "We're always looking for ways to improve the Fair experience for kids," Ruff explains. He says there will be great activities for youngsters, "which gives parents a

fairgoers have a feel for the new feature — they'll send the loop on its "naming voyage." In the interim, Fair staff is referring to it as "New Kids Way."

So where, exactly, is this new-fangled loop? "This will be immediately evident," Ruff says, "because it's right inside our bus admissions [area]." When arriving fairgoers step off the free shuttle bus, he explains, "just past that is the ... departure into this new loop segment, taking people into the woods where they haven't really had access to before."

If you choose not to follow the loop back to admissions, "it'll dump you out on the other side of the Gypsy Caravan stage," Ruff says.

More highlights along the loop include performances by local Native American storyteller Pony Gilbert, as well as a history booth, a "galleria philanthropia" and

photo taken, you automatically become part of the OCF official archives — not to mention getting to pick up a free, 4-by-6-inch print at a later date. Partnering with OCF on this project is local photographer Erin Dougherty Williams.

And this isn't all you'll come across during your ambles through the new loop. "There will certainly be a lot more art and surprises in that area," Ruff promises, though he says he's saving some secrets for guests to explore and discover themselves.

To view an online map of the Oregon Country Fair (yet to be updated with the new loop, but effective nonetheless), visit [oregoncountryfair.org](http://oregoncountryfair.org) **EW**

**“We’re always looking for ways to improve the fair experience for kids.”**

—CHARLIE RUFF

chance to see a show or have a little time for themselves.”

The loop provides a child care station. "It actually doubles our capacity to do child care," Ruff says. In the past, some folks were sent away due to the threat of overburdening existing child care facilities and staff. The new loop will have additional emergency exit capacity as well, Ruff adds — never a bad idea when it comes to large, active crowds.

For now, the loop lacks an official title. In fact, Ruff says, next year — after this year's introduction, and once

a giant teepee offering what Ruff says is a "handy resting place" for anyone desiring a moment to mellow out and chill with their kids.

Another new development at this year's Oregon Country Fair might just go down in history: a portrait booth. This booth offers fairgoers a means of memorializing their Fair getup (or perhaps get-down). By having your



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