

Livestock

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to walk early on until Perkins spent three days straight with her. It was a breakthrough moment for her and one of her favorite memories when the gilt began to walk.

"It's definitely a work in progress," she said, adding that she'll continue to participate until she ages out of the program at 21 years old.

Nolan Ewert and his sister Jade, both members of 4-H, mentioned just how much preparation goes into raising their livestock and preparing them for the show and auction — walking them, feeding them, making sure they get enough water when it's hot out. They'll often sleep in the pen with their goats Rocky and Boris to make them more comfortable with their touch and other people.

"We've spent a lot of time with these guys this year," Nolan said.

COMPETITION

There's an undeniable tension and excitement for 4-H and FFA members as they compete against each other to raise the best and most desirable livestock they can.

At FFA and 4-H shows throughout the fair, the tension was palpable. Many attendees talked in whispers as showmen members wrangled various animals including pigs, goats and lambs. With quiet crowds, the bleating and squealing of livestock rose to the front, focusing everyone's attention on the herculean effort of bending livestock to their showman's will.

Judges circle like sharks, watching how livestock look and move and act. Sometimes the smallest details can make or break a championship animal.

According to Jade Ewert, one of the main issues she had with her goat Boris was that its legs were a little too close together. The judge gave her good advice that if she rubs her goat's legs when they're small, then they'll get used to it. They also got new halters to help them walk better.

"I think we have an idea of what to do better next year," she said.

FINALE

It all comes down to the finale — the youth livestock auction.

Both exciting and heart-breaking, the Deschutes County Fair's youth livestock



Competitors line up their goats for judging at the Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo in Redmond on August 5.

Nick Rosenberger



A Redmond FFA member looks out over a livestock competition at the Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo in Redmond on August 5.

Nick Rosenberger

auction is where the culmination of everyone's tireless effort ends.

"We spent a lot of time with these guys," said Nolan Ewert. "So it can be sad at times."

"But, it's good to know that our hard work is finally paying off," added his sister Jade.

When everything comes together at the end of the process, Jade said, the end result is the most rewarding part.

This process and the showmen's determination to detail year after year can pay off. Ben Teixeira, owner of the grand champion cattle at this year's

fair, sold his 1,413-pound cow at Saturday's auction for \$20 per pound to Crews Ranch and ACC Cost Consultants, LLC. Jenna Gallacher, the reserve grand champion, sold her 1,400-pound cow for \$17 per pound to Coyote Rock Ranch.

BIG PICTURE

Shows and auctions can be nerve-racking for kids and parents who've spent months raising their livestock. But John Ramsey, an agriculture teacher for Culver High and Middle School and lifelong member of FFA, said it's more than just about agriculture and farming. It also gives participants valuable skills for any career, like confidence and public speaking.

"FFA is not just about plows and cows anymore," he said.

With every failure posted on Facebook nowadays, he said, the small wins the kids have in 4-H and FFA can give them the self-confidence to be able to walk up to a stranger and introduce themselves and talk about what they are passionate about.

Lance Hill, a Redmond High School agriculture teacher and FFA member, agreed. With agriculture combining so many different aspects of biology, history and math, they get to go beyond the classroom and

teach kids real-world skills "without all the rigmarole."

"We get to take what the math teachers teach them and show them how to apply it," he said.

Hill said FFA teachers are able to connect with kids who might be struggling in school. Hill was one of those kids himself, graduating high school with a 2.2 GPA. But after he found his love of agriculture and teaching, he earned a master's degree and found a fulfilling career.

"I was a junior in high school when I decided I wanted to be an ag teacher," he said. "I really loved what my ag teacher did — I got to see him change lives. Hell, he changed my life."

Hill said he was blessed to do what he does, and that there's not a day that goes by when he doesn't wake up excited about getting to work with kids and helping them shine.

"There's no words that could describe it," Ramsey said.

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Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo wraps up in Redmond

BY LEO BAUDHUIN

Redmond Spokesman

The sun beat down, live music filled the air and the ferris wheel took people up and down.

This year's Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo saw swarms of the Central Oregon community make their way out to Redmond's fairgrounds, for the first fair free of COVID-19 restrictions since the start of the pandemic.

"The fair was a great success this year," said Kathleen Curtis, who is in charge of the fair volunteer board and volunteers who work the fair.

Fairgoers browsed the various craft and political booths, played games, shrieked their way through carnival rides and loaded up on curly fries and slushies.

From time to time, they'd stop by an event — a water show, maybe, or a K-9 demonstration. The evening rodeo and concerts were well attended, according to organizers.

For others, the fair was an opportunity to show off the work they created in 2022. 4-H kids entered competitions with the goats, lambs and cattle they raised, rodeo queen Jessica Sperber opened each day's rodeo and artists like Speakthunder Berry took advantage of the fair's platform to share their culture and sell their work.

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Fairgoers wait in line for a ride while attending opening day of the Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo on Wednesday.

Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin



A contractor cuts material at Obsidian Middle School in Redmond on August 4 as construction on the school's bond project wraps up.

Nick Rosenberger/Spokesman

Bond projects

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Obsidian, which opened in 1980, is getting the most renovations simply because it is older than the others, most of which were built 12-15 years ago. Despite this, all schools in the district will see improvements to safety and security systems.

At Obsidian, crews will be adding 20 additional parking spaces and improve ADA-accessibility, including ADA accessible bathroom stalls and ADA pads for the football field. Crews will also add new fire and security systems, a new intercom, cameras and an access control system. They will also be renovating a computer/maker space.

Big changes will also hit the administration of Obsidian. Instead of sitting in the center of the building, offices will move to the northern side to create a more secure entryway for parents to drop off their children. It will also create a required check-in desk for all visitors.

In the past, parents used the southern parking lot to drop off their children. This will now take place in the north-side parking lot while the south side will be used for buses and staff.

The south-side parking lot will get its own renovations with additional ADA improvements, fixes for the breezeway and an added gate and fence.

Tom McCall/Elton Gregory will also get a renovation on its entryways, with an emphasis on safety and security as well as new access control and intercom systems.

Outside of the three major projects, a variety of upgrades and improvements will be hitting schools across the district from repairing sidewalks at Hugh Hartman Elementary and fixing asbestos piping and tiles at Redmond High School and John Tuck Elementary to replacing the roof of Tumalo Community School.

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