



WELCOME
2018

BIGGER & BETTER

Fairgoers walk the promenade populated by food vendors at the Umatilla County Fair.

EO file photo

Umatilla County Fair settles into new grounds, looks to grow

If there's one thing the Umatilla County Fair is looking to be this year, it is bigger and better than last year.

In 2017 the fair moved to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center — a 92-acre events center with lots of room to grow.

For fair board chairman Gay Newman, the most exciting part of this year's fair is potential for improvement.

"Last year was growing pains," he said. "The first time was tough but hopefully it gets

a lot easier as we go along."

But Newman has hopes of the Umatilla County Fair being one of the nicest fairs in the Northwest when it's done.

"We are one of the fairs that everybody is looking at — new facility, big — and this county is growing and we have tremendous support," Newman said. "As the county gets bigger we get bigger."

According to Newman, the fair has been working hard to improve many of the problems it experienced last year, such

as parking, which irked many fair-goers. This year, there will be three lanes coming in to the parking lots, rather than the one lane from last year, and there will be professionals directing the flow of traffic.

And the parking isn't the only thing that's changed. The carnival is expected to be bigger, with more rides and easier access. Newman said there will be about 27 food vendors, so people can try a little bit of everything. Bathroom facilities have been improved. The internal layout of EOTEC has changed, so more people can view the 4-H exhibits, the Budweiser Clydesdales will be making an appearance, and to

top it all off, there will be a new zip line that runs on the far side of the fairgrounds.

"The rodeo has improved their show too. Everyone has been working on improving," said Newman.

The Umatilla County Fair is meant to be for everyone. From entertainment to food, it brings a variety for all different tastes. Newman said for people interested in agriculture, 4-H is there. Some people from the cities come to see the evening concert series. And kids primarily want to ride the carnival rides.

"There's really not one thing. There's something for everybody," he said.