

Planning, preparations being made for Wallowa County Fair

Restrictions that limited last year's fair deemed unlikely

By ANN BLOOM
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Although still weeks away, the Wallowa County Fair is fast approaching and will be here before we know it. And, just like Uncle Sam did during World War II, your fair wants you.

The fair wants your canned peaches, your paintings and photographs, pickles and quilts, your hobby displays, flowers and plants, cakes, cookies, eggs and pies, your lettuce, beets and cabbages. If you think you don't have anything to enter into the fair, you're wrong. Everyone has something that could be turned into a fair exhibit. And, although the fair isn't until the second week of August it is not

too late to start thinking and planning.

The theme for this year is: "Making It Happen — Wallowa County Fair 2021."

"Whatever your interest, we have a place for you at the fair," said Tera Elliott, fair board office manager.

The fair, which this year is Aug. 6-14, was markedly different last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Cloverleaf Hall exhibits were canceled, but according to Wallowa County Fair Board Chairwoman Brinda Stanley, the Wallowa County community can look forward to a fair that is back to being what it was prior to the pandemic.

"We were so thankful that we were able to hold our sized-down fair last year, but I foresee us being bigger this year than last. We learned a lot from last year and made some changes that we agree will be carried forward this year," she said.

One new feature this year is the Cloverleaf Walk. This is the lane leading from the



Debi Warnock/Contributed Photo
Lela Kunkle presents a ribbon to Devin Schreiber during last year's Wallowa County Fair. The 2021 edition takes place Aug. 6-14.

year, she said that would be done. It is too early to say whether the food booth will be open to the public, she added.

"We will take whatever actions are needed to have a great, but safe, fair. I am hopeful that when August comes, we can all know we are going to attend a very fun, family-oriented Wallowa County Fair," Stanley said.

However, both Elliott and Stanley mentioned that things may change if the state changes its mandates and protocols involving COVID-19 regulations.

A county fair would not be a county fair without sheep, pigs, horses, beef and all the other assorted livestock that go with it along with the youths needed to show them. The youth programs of 4-H and FFA are a large part of what makes up the Wallowa County Fair.

Debi Warnock, the Oregon State University 4-H/family community health agent for Wallowa County, said things are looking positive in terms of 4-H participation at the fair this year.

"There will be an opportunity for 4-H members to exhibit and show what they've learned this last year. They'll be able to show their animals and exhibits," she said.

As of mid-May, she said she was looking forward to a full schedule at the county fair. She had also received word that youths will have the opportunity to show their animals and exhibits at the state fair in Salem later this year.

"That is very exciting. Things are looking positive," she said.

Elliott said anyone who plans to enter an exhibit in open class needs to come to the fair office, located at the OSU Extension Service Office, across from the Cloverleaf Hall, to pick up an exhibitor tag (one tag per exhibit) and sign up for an exhibitor number (one number per exhibitor). The office is open between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Questions should be directed to the fair office at 541-426-4097. Exhibits also carry premiums (cash amounts) for first-, second- and third-place ribbons.

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east gate of the fairgrounds between the grandstands and the food booth. The Wallowa County Farmers Market will be set up along the lane on Thursday, Aug. 12, and will feature crafts and fresh produce. On Friday, a variety of collectible hot rod cars and old-time farm equipment will be on display.

"This is a new thing we're doing that we think will be a lot of fun," Elliott said.

Gail Hillock, who is the fair board secretary, also coordinates the open-class exhibits and entries for Cloverleaf Hall. This is her fifth year as the open-class coor-

inator. She said she hopes for a large number of entries since the open-class part of the fair was canceled last year.

"The open-class aspect of the fair is for the public," she said. "It's always interesting to see what our local neighbors have been working on. Whether it's photography, art, sewing, crafts, hobbies, baking, gardening and more, please enter your best and share it with the county."

Stanley said a lot was learned from last year's fair, and some changes were made on how the fair was conducted, many of which

will be done again at this year's fair.

"The fair schedule will reflect some of those changes, one being the Fat Stock Sale ran so nicely outside that we will try to continue that," she said.

COVID-19 still on the mind of organizers

Precautions will be in place concerning COVID-19, much as was the case last year. Much of the fair is outside, which requires fewer mandates, Stanley said. Hand sanitizing and social distancing were practiced last year and if required this

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Jada Gray hit the biggest shot of the game for the Enterprise girls basketball team on Tuesday, June 1, 2021. Gray scored 14 points in the game, and her rebound and putback with 1:10 remaining in overtime was the difference as the Outlaws defeated Wallowa, 40-38, to kick off a 2-0 week.

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