

# Fair attendance, revenue increases

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — Attendance and revenue were up for the Polk County Fair in 2017, mostly the result of pleasant weather on the fair's closing day, said Fair Manager Tina Andersen.

During the fair's three-day run Aug. 10-12, there were 10,658 people counted coming through the gates. That's up from 9,282 in 2016, Andersen said.

That count includes fair volunteers and others who don't pay admission. Andersen said the real story is in paid attendance, which is up 11 percent.

She said attendance on Thursday — the day of the rodeo — was strong.

"It wasn't a record, but still good," she said.

Friday attendance was typical, she added.

"Then Saturday just boomed," Andersen said. "I think the weather finally broke."

The beer and wine garden performed well, up 40 percent from last year. Andersen said that is mostly due to an effort to make the garden more welcoming to the average fairgoer.

Instead of a tent that separated the beer and wine



Stephanie Blair/Itemizer-Observer file

**Youths lead their goats through the annual goat obstacle course competition at the Polk County Fair.**

garden from the rest of the fair, this year featured picnic tables and places for families to sit while the adults enjoyed a libation.

"We wanted to open it up more so people aren't squeezed into a tent and feeling punished for wanting a beer," Andersen said.

She said since the fair added adult beverages to the fair, people have behaved themselves. The typical patron spends enough time in the beer garden to have a glass of beer or wine — not the whole day,

Andersen said.

"We have such great families who come to our fair," she said.

Beer and wine was served at the arena all three days, instead of on Thursday during the rodeo, which helped boost revenue.

Positioning the main stage in the center of the fair was a success that will be followed in the future.

"People wanted it moved, and we tried, but it didn't work," Andersen said.

There were a few complaints that stage entertain-

ment was a little loud in the animal barns, which fair staff will work on remedying for next year.

Andersen said attempts to make the youth livestock auction move a little faster were successful — and without much loss in revenue.

The 2017 auction sold 33 fewer animals than last year, but was down 1 percent in dollars. Andersen said fewer animals meant higher bids for those that were part of the auction.

While attendance and revenue were both up this year, the annual fair will still lose money. Andersen said the fair loses between \$10,000 and \$20,000 each year. She said the losses will be on the lower end of that range this year due to Saturday's success and cooler weather overall.

Andersen said with a number of county fairs happening in the region around the same time, the event isn't a money maker for the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center.

"It's the right thing to do for the kids," she said.

The 2018 version of fair is taking shape already, with the highlight being a youth and adult talent show returning to the entertainment schedule.

# Monmouth council looks at city growth

By Herb Swett  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — A proposal to update a Polk County plan for procedures involving the use of deadly physical force by law enforcement officers was tabled at the Oct. 3 Monmouth City Council meeting.

State law requires that each Oregon county form a planning authority for guidelines regarding deadly physical force by law enforcement officers throughout the county. The Polk County Planning Authority recently adopted minor updates to its plan, which was originally adopted in 2008.

Once a city in the county approves an update proposal, it is forwarded to the state attorney general for final review and approval. Police Chief Darrell Tallan said city staff recommended approval.

Councilor Jon Carey noted that the plan calls for elected officials to review it. He said that he had not read it and urged that it be tabled until all council members had read it. The council will take up the issue Oct. 17.

Also tabled was a Building Department proposal for a 10 percent fee increase for all

statewide specialty codes that the city administers. Building Official Larry Thornton said the increase was needed to maintain the viability of the department and adjust for increasing costs. He said such an increase would generate about \$15,000 a year. Thornton also recommended that the council hold a hearing in the second week of November for all increases to take effect Jan. 1, 2018.

Councilor Laurel Sharmer, noting what she called "a scathing personal attack" a city department head made on her on Facebook, called it libelous and urged that City Manager Scott McClure take disciplinary action against the department head.

In a council work session that followed the meeting, members of the Tree Advisory Board discussed planting one or more trees on the Monmouth Elementary School campus honoring certain people in the community who died prematurely.

Mayor Steve Milligan noted that there will be a town hall meeting at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 19 in the Monmouth Library. Carey expressed concern that Monmouth has several marijuana stores but no supermarket.

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