

Morrow County Fair features bountiful food and fun

By Tammy Malgesini

Go! Magazine

HEPPNER — The Morrow County Fair is gearing up for a fantastic year, Fair Secretary Ann Jones said. The four-day event gets underway Wednesday, Aug. 17, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Morrow County Fairgrounds, 74473 Highway 74.

This year's event, Jones said, is extra special. Held on the final two days of the fair, the Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo is celebrating its centennial.

The 2022 fair theme — The Bounty of our County — highlights the region's rich agricultural history, as well as showcases the talents of the region's adults and youths. Jones said 4-H and FFA, in particular, help in developing interests, personal growth and leadership skills.

"I think it's important as adults to support that," she said. "Working on projects gives kids drive and focus."

However, that's only one aspect of the fair — there are lots of fun things to do, including a parade (Aug. 20, 10 a.m.) with many past royalty court members expected, special dinners (Aug. 17-18, 7 p.m.) and the Kids' Fun Zone (daily, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.). It features a mechanical bull, an arcade room, face painting and a balloon artist.

One of the fair's most popular events, Jones said, is an ice cream social (Aug. 18, 3 p.m.). With the Blue Mountain Old-Time Fiddlers performing from 2:30-4:30 p.m., people can enjoy Tillamook ice cream while listening to toe-tappin' music.

Also, the fair wrangled in a couple of female favorites. Jessie Leigh (Aug. 17, 7-10 p.m.) and Olivia Harms (Aug. 19, 1-3 p.m.), the daughter of Western Music Hall of Fame member Joni Harms, are both returning to the fair's main stage.

"She's just a bundle of energy," Jones said about Leigh. "She puts on a great show."

After trying to book Zac Grooms for several years, the stars finally aligned. Fairgoers will get a double-shot with two performances (Aug. 20, noon and



Kelton Maxfield of Nampa, Idaho, hangs onto a bronc in the novice bareback competition on Aug. 21, 2021, at the Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo. Held in conjunction with the Morrow County Fair, the rodeo is celebrating its centennial year Aug. 19-20, 2022, in Heppner.

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5:30 p.m.). In addition to original songs, Grooms plays a variety of country covers.

An Arlington native, Grooms is the frontman for Brewer's Grade Band. In 2018, the group reeled in the country band of the year award from the International Music and Entertainment Association.

If 2021's record-breaking rodeo crowds are any indication, the rodeo's centennial event (Aug. 19-20, 7 p.m.) should bust out of the chutes. Come at least 30 minutes early, get settled in your seats and cheer on the kids in mutton bustin' contests.

After the nightly rodeo performances, Dan Burns 3D Productions will crank things up with music, lights and fog. People can dance the night away, even if they don't attend the rodeo.

Also, visitors are encouraged to linger a little longer. The Morrow County Jackpot Rodeo (Aug. 21, at 1 p.m.) features local cowboys.

Rodeo tickets are \$10 general, \$6 ages 7-12 and free for ages 6 and under. For tickets and additional information, visit www.oregontrailprorodeo.com or call 541-256-0217.

Fair admission is free thanks to gate sponsor Lamb Weston. For more about the fair, including a full schedule, visit www.co.morrow.or.us/fair. For questions, call 541-676-9474.



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