

Parade kicks off Umatilla County Fair

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The best of Umatilla County was on display Saturday in a miles-long parade to officially kick off the 101st Umatilla County Fair.

The Kick-Off Parade drew thousands to line the streets of Hermiston for more than two hours of floats, horses, free candy and more.

Rose Jurcich, a Hermiston High School sophomore, said her favorite part of the parade was spotting her friends waving from various floats, representing FFA and marching with the high school's band.

She came along to watch the parade with Arely Amaya, who said her favorite part of the parade was the horses.

"I liked it when ... the horses were dancing to the music," she said. "I thought it was pretty great overall."

Both girls said the parade put them in the mood to go to the fair, which they were looking forward to this week.

Pat Brown of Hermiston also said the horses were her favorite part of watching the fair parade each year.

"There were awfully pretty cowgirl outfits and horses," she said.

Her favorite float was the one celebrating Filipino heritage, which featured traditional Filipino clothing and music.

Alan and Donna Vore of Portland were in town visiting family, and said they were glad that the visit coincided with the parade.

"I loved the parade," Donna said. "It's small town, and I just loved the feel of it."

She said there's a certain kind of pride that comes from living in a small town that's fun for big-city residents to see — not to mention a taste of farm life.

"I loved the tractors, because you don't get to see those in the city," she said.

Alan said one of his favorite parts was watching his grandchildren run around collecting candy thrown from floats.

"They got a lot of loot,"



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL
A John Deere tractor from Amstad Farms drives down the road at the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade on Saturday



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL
Happy Canyon Princesses ride in the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade on Saturday.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL
FFA students ride a float at the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade on Saturday.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL
Members of Cub Scout Troop 645 ride a float in the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade Saturday.

he said. "It's better than Halloween."

There was plenty of candy for the kids, but the adults got excited about a few handouts too.

All ages were scrambling in the streets when the Tillamook Cheese contingent walked by, scattering shrink-wrapped samples of their famous cheddar cheese. And there were plenty of adults who didn't mind jumping up and down to catch the attention of the children and teens handing out free watermelons from Bellinger Farms and Walchli Farms.

The parade was the official kick-off to the Umatilla County Fair, which opened its gates to the public Tuesday morning and continues through Saturday.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL
Sheriff Terry Rowan waves as he walks down the street during the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade on Saturday.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEXA LOUGEE
Children observe the sheep at the 4-H barn.

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Check out the backyard bbq contest or watermelon seed spitting contest. Hang around at the robotics workshop or take in one of many featured variety, magic or comedy shows.

Even the snakes at the

exotic animal exhibit are ready for visitors.

If someone is bored at the 2016 Umatilla County Fair, they have nobody to blame but themselves.

There is something sure to appeal to everyone, young and old, city slicker or country hick.

The fairgrounds open at to the public 9 a.m. daily.

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