

FUN:

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"If you get lost, you probably need to Google our website for our phone number and we'll send a runner to get you," Gina said with a laugh.

Inspired by the fall extravaganza at Pasco's Country Mercantile, the site also includes other activities. People are encouraged to bring cash (or they may pay by credit card with a minimum \$10 charge). Additional activities include a Crazy Train Ride for kids, corn cannons, a straw bale maze and a corn pit. Also, a zip-line may be added, depending on insurance concerns, Gina said. In addition, concessions will be available for purchase. Fire pit rentals and space for private parties are also available.

Gina is excited about having an array of activities to draw people to the attraction. Setting up the corn pit, she said, includes putting hay or straw bales in a U-shape.

"We'll dump in a bunch of kernels of corn in there and kids can jump in there and have a good time," she said. "It's a different texture, but it's kind of like jumping into the pits with balls."

Gina is energized by the sense of community as her family has worked on the maze and activities. A number of businesses have extended their hand in support.

In addition to the fun activities, Gina is happy to provide an opportunity for people to learn more about the connection from farm to table through "agritainment."

"It's a fun way to get in the dirt and learn a little bit about agriculture," she said. "We're a working farm."

For more information, visit www.echocornmaze.com, www.facebook.com/echocrazycornmaze or call 509-528-5808.

FESTIVAL:

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Upstairs, Del and Phyllis Piper manned their booth with a selection of homemade Raggedy Ann-style dolls. The couple, which used to own Del's Market in Lexington before retiring, has attended every Harvest Festival since it began.

Phyllis Piper originally began making dolls for her two daughters nearly 50 years ago. She bought the original pattern for 35 cents, and figures she's made several hundred dolls over the course of about 10 years.

"Little girls just love them," she said. "They're soft and cuddly."

Raggedy Ann is a legendary creation, Phyllis said, and continues to be enormously popular. Plus, making the dolls is a way to keep her busy.

"I do an assembly line, maybe six at a time," she said. "I just like to keep busy."

In addition to Phyllis' dolls, Del showed off his book of nature photography, poems and short stories titled "The Legends of Mud Hollow," which he published in 2011. The majority of his shots are of elk in the Blue Mountains, which he captures using infrared, motion-triggered trail cameras.

"These things are wilder than rolling thunder," he said.

Across the room, Dave and Carmen Williams, also of Lexington, set up their table with a wide variety of leather key chains, wallets, coin purses, handmade towels and wood carved accessories.

Dave Williams figures he's been crafting for about 10



STAFF PHOTO BY GEORGE PAVLEN

Del and Phyllis Piper, of Lexington, sold a collection of Raggedy Ann dolls during the third annual Morrow County Harvest Festival at the SAGE Center.



STAFF PHOTO BY GEORGE PAVLEN

Kristy Bensal, 16, sells produce for the Hermiston Melon Company during the third annual Morrow County Harvest Festival outside the SAGE Center.

years now since retiring.

"You've got to do something other than play golf," he said with a smile. "Otherwise, you'll go nuts."

Outside the museum, kids could go on horse and buggy rides, race through a maze or paint their own pumpkins. Local farmers set up shop to sell

some of the region's famous produce, such as watermelons, sweet onions, potatoes and peppers.

Davis said she hopes out-of-town visitors would come away with a sense of how important farming is to Morrow County.

"Agriculture is obviously a huge industry for us here," she said. "It provides thousands of jobs. It really boosts the economy here, and provides a lot of growth."

Craft beverages from Sno Road Winery of Echo and Ordinance Brewing of Boardman were on hand for sampling. Fresh coffee, courtesy of Home Town Coffee Roasters in Arlington, was also available.

Roast Master Tami Williamson said she got started four years ago, and sales have been steadily and progressively improving. She buys her beans



STAFF PHOTO BY GEORGE PAVLEN

Dave Williams, of Lexington, shows off his handmade leather keychains at the third annual Morrow County Harvest Festival.

from an importer in Seattle, which delivers in 150-pound bags to her garage.

Coffee roasting has been a dream of Williamson's ever since she used to work for the state Employment Department in The Dalles.

"I was sitting in my cubicle and dreaming of being a coffee roaster," she said. "What I like (about the Harvest Festival) is meeting people and telling them about my business. It gets me out there and meeting face-to-face with people."

Admission to the Morrow County Harvest Festival is free, which Davis said is unusual for an event of its size. The goal, she said, is for people to spend their money instead on the cornucopia of local goods on full display.

Contact George Plaven at 541-966-0825.

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