



Illinois
Association
of
Agricultural
Fairs

October 2007

TentTalk

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Purvis Wins Fair Person of Year

Ken Purvis, a 40-year volunteer for the Mendota Tri-County Fair was named "Outstanding County Fair Person of the Year" at the opening day of the Illinois State Fair during an awards luncheon on the Director's Lawn to celebrate County Fairs and Horse Racing Day.

His selfless efforts, along with a positive attitude and full toolbox, have allowed the fair to flourish," Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs President Bill Jennings said.

Purvis, a fair board member for 35 years, developed the Tri-County Fair's demolition derby, served as race-track chairman for 40 years and truck and tractor pull chairman for 25 years.

He first started volunteering for the Mendota Tri-County Fair when helping with the truck and tractor pull at age 16.

A number of volunteers were recognized for 20, 30, and 40 years worth of service to Illinois County Fairs.

"I'm often asked 'How do you keep the county fair schedule that you do in Illinois?'" IAAF President Bill Jennings said.

His answer was, "It comes from hard work through volunteers like these."

The service award recipients were as follows:



Chuck Hartke, Illinois Director of Agriculture, and Charlyn Fargo, Bureau Chief of County Fairs, congratulate Ken Purvis upon his being awarded Illinois County Fair Person of the Year at the 2007 Illinois State Fair.

20 years of service

Mark Brangenberg- Calhoun County, Terry Strauch- Calhoun County, Corinne Brown- Ford County, Mary Liz Wright- Edgar County, and Carol Keller- Edgar County,

30 years of service

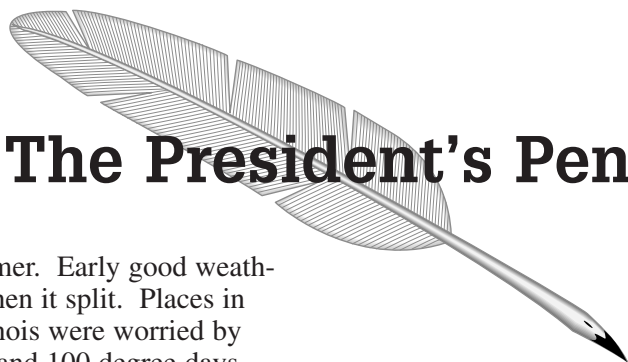
Judy Reimer-Shelby County, Glenn Peterson-

Whiteside County, Dean Reeves- Marion County, and Russell Vandever- Marion County.

40 years of service

Marvin Perzee- Iroquois County, Don Smith- Sangamon County, and Ron Stickler- Vermillion County- Danville.

The President's Pen



What a summer. Early good weather all over, then it split. Places in southern Illinois were worried by dry weather and 100 degree days.

Concerns over field fires and burning up crops plagued the south while at the same time and late into the season the north was wet to the point of a disaster. The results were all over the board with some great fairs and some that were near, if not disasters. We will all survive and continue another year.

The legislative year was somewhat the same as the weather. Nobody knew what to expect out of Springfield and we still aren't sure, as the battle continues. We seem to have held on to some of the money we got last year but nothing new.

We must continue the fight remembering what we learned this year-- that anything may happen. It becomes even more important now to talk to your individual legislators about helping county fairs.

As I traveled the state and visited many fairs during, before and after their dates, I am reminded that we not only have visitors during our fair dates, but throughout the entire year as well. That visit can leave a

good or a bad impression on the visitor. I found both. Things such as barns left without cleaning out manure, trash bins not dumped or just weeds and grass not mowed from the previous year.

I also found some beautiful facilities, which were being used for picnics and many other community services. As we continue to fight for funding we must remember that a legislator may also visit when our fair is not going on and his impression could be the swing vote or influence that may help us get or not get, the funding we need.

Please look at your facility and think what kind of showplace or image it presents, and would you be glad to have your legislator visit anytime to show them what you are doing.

Sincerely

Bill Jennings
President

Make Plans for Annual Meeting

Start making plans today for the 98th annual meeting of the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs.

All Illinois fair people are invited to attend, to team up and to be "Pardners" for a successful 2008 fair season. The convention, trade show, talent contest, showcase of entertainment and the Illinois County Fair Banquet and County Fair Queen Pageant will be held January 18-20, 2008 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield.

Dr. Larry Helms will return as our keynote speaker at the Saturday

morning breakfast. Convention room and registration packets will be mailed to all fair and associate members in early October.

Please roundup your reservations and return them as quickly as you possibly can.

Bit and Piece

"The principle mark of a genius is not perfection, but originality, the opening of new frontiers."

—Arthur Koestler

Dates to Remember

- Talent and Queen Entries Due**
Sunday, October 1, 2007
- Grand Summary Premium Report Due** — October 15, 2007
- Central Zone Meeting-Springfield**
Sunday, October 28, 2007
- Northern Zone Meeting-Ottawa**
Sunday, November 4, 2007
- Southern Zone Meeting-Mt. Vernon**
Sunday, November 11, 2007
- IAFE Convention, Las Vegas**
November 26-29, 2007
- Declaration of Intent & F&E Bonds Due** — December 31, 2007
- IAAF Convention, Springfield**
January 18-20, 2008

Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs

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www.IllinoisCountyFairs.org

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Governor Signs Two New Worker Laws

Governor Rod R. Blagojevich recently signed a new law, House Bill 820, which requires carnival owners and operators to conduct background checks on workers.

The law was enacted to prohibit convicted sex offenders from operating carnival rides at amusement parks, fairs and other attractions. Most carnival owners feel this act should end the continual attempts by the legislature to legislate carnival hiring practices in Illinois.

Most also feel the considerable time and money spent lobbying for a workable bill was worth the effort.

House Bill 820, sponsored by State Representative Kevin Joyce (D-Worth) and State Senator Pamela J. Althoff (R-Crystal Lake), prohibits a carnival owner or operator from employing a carnival worker who has been convicted of rape, murder or certain sexual offenses set forth in Articles 9 and 11 of the Criminal Code of 1961, or is a registered sex offender.

HB 820 requires carnival owners and operators to conduct a criminal history records check and a Sex Offender Registry check for each carnival worker they employ, and to have a substance abuse policy in place for such workers.

The legislation amends the Carnival and Amusement Rides Safety Act and authorizes the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL), which enforces the Act, to impose civil penalties if violations of the law are found.

HB 820 requires carnival owners and operators to check the criminal history records of each carnival worker before hiring them, starting January 1, 2008. The new law provides that:

- A person cannot be hired as a carnival operator or assistant if that person is a registered sex offender or has ever been convicted of rape, murder or certain sexual offenses;

- Any carnival owner or operator who hires a carnival worker in violation of the new hiring provisions

shall be assessed a civil penalty of \$1,000-\$5,000 for the first offense and \$5,000-\$10,000 for the second offense;

- Carnival owners may work with local enforcement agencies in order to expedite the criminal history records check if the worker is hired on a temporary basis;

- Individuals under the age of 17 are exempt from criminal history check requirements.

- Owners and operators of carnivals must have substance abuse policies in place for its workers, including random drug testing;

- A "carnival worker" is defined as a person who is employed by a carnival to physically operate or assist in the operation of an amusement ride or attraction open to the public and;

- The Illinois Department of Labor will establish training standards for ride operators to ensure that operators know how to operate

rides safely.

HB 820 goes into effect immediately, except for the background checks provision which becomes effective January 1, 2008.

Gov. Blagojevich also recently signed legislation to prevent convicted sex offenders from working at county fairs when minors are present.

House Bill 156 amends the Criminal Code and prohibits a convicted sex offender to knowingly operate, manage, be employed by, or be associated with any county fair when children younger than 18 years of age are present.

A violation of this provision would be a Class 4 felony, which carries a prison sentence of one to three years and a maximum penalty of \$25,000. HB 156 will become effective on January 1, 2008.

There is no liability on the part of county fairs relating to this act. The burden is on the offender.



A long time concessionaire at many Illinois Fairs, Frank Parnell, was found selling one of his nearly world famous funnel cakes to a hungry customer at an entrance gate of the Sandwich Fair.

Here Are a Few Scenes from Illinois' Great



Mutton Bustin'

The "Mutton Bustin" event was a weeklong major attraction for families at the Lake County Fair. Kids trying to ride sheep were always being cheered on by their families and friends.



Will County Needed Noah

The animals at the 2007 Will County Fair were looking for Noah's Ark. Ron Meyer, fair secretary, reported that the fair received over eleven inches of rain. All grandstand events and many other activities that were scheduled after the first day had to be canceled because of flood conditions. Lightning also caused some damage to buildings and some carnival rides.

County Fair Attractions Held This Summer



"Livestock exhibiting at a fair can be a family venture in cooperation," noted Charlotte and Chris Tyrrell as they tended to Chris's holstein heifers at the Sandwich Fair.



This sign posted at the DuPage County Fair really tells the story behind a successful fair. Volunteers.



Another successful Logan County Fair brought smiles to the fair's secretary, Mike Maske. Mike is very proud of the 1908 Illinois State Fair Poster that adorns his office wall.



IAAF Associate member, Brenda Smith of A Clown and More, was a popular grounds attraction at the Livingston County 4-H Fair. A line of kids was waiting to have their faces painted. They could choose their new face from a variety of characters.



DuPage County Fair



Sangamon County

Wash Your Hands Is Simple Message to Teach Your Visitors

It's a simple message that we assume that parents are teaching their children. How many times have you heard "wash your hands?" It sounds simple. It is. But, the reality check is fairs still need to tell

their patrons, "Please, wash your hands!"

Fifty - two people from forty- five Illinois fairs participated in a day-long workshop in late May. The program was created by Dr. Stephen Neel of Technical Solutions International. Dr. Neel's purpose is to help fair people better understand enteric pathogens and how to develop a plan. His goal is for fairs to minimize their guests' contact with pathogens such as E.Coli 0157:H7.

"The information and tools we received were most helpful to understanding and implementing an E. Coli program to inform and protect our Livingston County 4-H Fair guests" said the 4-H Fair president, Robbie Ruff. The potential severity and mechanisms for an individual to be infected with E. Coli were stressed throughout the workshop. Armed with a workbook full of suggestions for implementation of appropriate signage, barriers, and hand washing stations, attendees were encouraged to take an action plan before this year's fair.

Marion County Fair board member, Russell Vandever reported that a young patron at their Marion County Fair had contracted the E. Coli virus. No one is certain the boy was infected at the fair. The Marion County fair feels fortunate to have been proactive in taking the precautionary measures they did to warn the public of such hazards. The fair board followed the workshops plan thoroughly and has their documented protection program in place.

If your fair wasn't represented at the seminar in May you'll get another chance at the IAAF convention in January to be informed on this topic. An extended table topic session targeting E. Coli is being planned for the convention. Please plan to have representatives at session so all of our Illinois fairs are prepared for this danger.

The IAAF would like to thank the Illinois Department of Agriculture and IAFE for being co-sponsors for the spring workshop featuring Dr. Neel.



Ford County Fair



This hand washing station was spotted at the Menard County Fair in the Scout Craft entries. The blue ribbon entry of a solar heated camp wash station was exhibited by Patrick Richardson.



Western Illinois Fair



Celebrate SLA Day at McLean

Nearly 70 employees helped Fantasy Carnival Owners, Bill and Mary Johnson, celebrate Showmen's League of America Day on August 5th at the McLean County Fair. On that day many carnival personnel across America were wearing a special shirt commemorating the organization. The SLA, as it is known, was started in 1913 and was first led by Buffalo Bill Cody. The group promotes friendship and fellowship among its members involved in the outdoor amusement business industry.



New Trailer for Sponsors Provides Great Vantage Point at DuPage

Ellen Sietmann, DuPage County Fair manager, Kitty Cooney fair director, and Wilbert Hageman, fair president, survey the Dupage County Fair grounds from the porch of the fair's new sponsor trailer. Sponsors may use this trailer as a gathering spot and they can use the porch to watch grandstand entertainment.



Charlyn's Corner

*Charlyn Fargo,
Bureau Chief of
County Fairs &
Horse Racing*

What a fun summer! Illinois Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke and I made it to 73 county fairs this summer as well as the Illinois State Fair and the DuQuoin State Fair. If we didn't make yours, don't worry, you're on the list for next year. We did drug testing of horses at 16 of the 38 fairs that have harness racing.

It was great seeing all the different things each fair does to celebrate Illinois agriculture and our heritage in county fairs. I was impressed with how hard all of you work to make your fair a success, and how much fun you have doing that.

That week of your county fair is a welcome respite to our busy lives, a time to reconnect with neighbors and family, and a time to focus on the positive things about agriculture. I was also pleased to see so many of you provided handwashing stations and signs for fairgoers attending your fairs. You took our message on E.coli to heart.

As fall approaches, I look forward to seeing what we can do to make county fairs stronger. I'll be attending the three Zone meetings and of course, the annual convention in January. I hope during those times

we can share ideas. We will also be giving you information on premise ID registration that your exhibitors will need to know. We want to have all locations with livestock identified by a premise ID if the exhibitor plans to show at a county fair or state fair.

Enjoy the fall season, and for those of you farming, have a safe harvest!

Charlyn

A Reminder

The judges form which all fairs must submit to the IDOA by October 15th may be found on the Illinois Department of Ag's website. Please go to www.agr.state.il.us and then tap on "forms and applications." This form and all other County Fair forms will be found under the county fair section.

IN MEMORIAM

Dallas W. Steward of rural Raymond, Illinois, passed away on May 26, 2007. Dallas was a charter member of the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair Association founded in 1985. Over the past 22 years, Dallas was a key member of the fair board, serving for seven years as its president. He also held the offices of vice president and secretary.

Dallas was the announcer for grandstand events for many, many years. He was very involved in bringing the truck and tractor pulls, garden tractor pulls and antique tractor shows to the Montgomery County Fair.

Dallas was also a member of the Montgomery County Farm Bureau and the Midwest Tractor Collectors Club. He leaves his wife, Nancy, and son, John and his wife Mandy of Raymond and a daughter, Dena, of Litchfield, and four grandchildren.

Gene O'Brien, 77, of Valrico, FL, passed away June 11, 2007. He was born in Louisville, KY, on January 25, 1930.

Gene established Irish O'Briens' Food Service, the family business, and was the founding president of the National Independent Concessionaires Association (NICA).

He is survived by his wife of 37 years, SanDee; seven children and their spouses, Debbie and Mitch, Tim and Justine, Todd and Beth, Dean and Carla, Gina and Marc White, Dena, and Erin; fifteen grandchildren, Sean, Kevin, Dave, DeeAnna, Jody, Cody, Jared, Kassie, Angie, Shay, Seth, Jacob, Tyler, Abby, Meghan; and three great-grandchildren, Mackenzie, Emily, and Gabriella.



**Illinois
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