

Deschutes County Fair Offers Fun for All

by K_Guice

People heading over to the Deschutes County Fair and Rodeo will be met with a few new sights and sounds and one less headache. Fair officials have announced a new entrance has been added to the fairgrounds in hopes of drastically reducing congestion for this year's fair that runs through Sunday, August 6.

“It will offer better parking and crowd control,” said Dan Despotopulos, director of the Deschutes Country Fairgrounds and Expo Center. “As the county gets bigger and more people come to the fair that can lead to lots of problems.”

Look for signs to the new entrance at the end of 19th street. “And parking is free,” Despotopulos said.

In addition, the fair will have free shuttle rides running every 30 minutes. “We offer the free bus from Mt. Bachelor Park & Ride (in Bend) right to the front door,” he said. “It’s great and it’s free.”

That is one of the many free things fair goers will encounter. From free concerts to select free rides, Despotopulos says people get a big value for the price of admission.

“We have three stages of entertainment that is all free, there is going to be all kinds of rides for kids: mini-monster trucks, mini-tractor rides for the kids and pony rides -- all of which is free,” he said.

The concerts are one of the biggest draws to the fair. The fair kicked things off Wednesday, August 2 with country star Lee Ann Womack. That was followed up on Thursday, August 3 with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

Fair planners encourage concert-goers heading to 38 Special, Friday, August 4, to leave as early as possible. The concert will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Hooker Creek Event Center. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 5th there will be a fair parade running through Downtown Redmond. Anyone who would like to participate in the parade can register from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. that morning at the corner of 7th and Dogwood in Redmond.

Other new fun freebies at this year's fair include free fares. "On Sunday, we have free senior citizen day for everyone 55 and over," Despotopulos said.

Another free event worth checking out is the draft horse show in the outdoor arena on Sunday. "This is something we have never done before," he said. "The draft horses are like the big Clydesdales and they do different maneuvers while they are pulling the wagons."

Fair goers can also take dozens of carnival rides and of course, great fair food. "There is tons of food," Despotopulos said. "It's part of the fair. There are 28 different food vendors serving up everything from hot dogs on a stick to funnel cakes. So, what is Despotopulos personal favorite? "I like the euro sandwich," he said.

Admission for adults is \$9. Children and seniors are \$6. Tickets are available at the Deschutes County Fairground & Expo Center Ticket Box Office located in the Administration Building or any Ticketmaster outlet. You may also charge tickets by phone at 1-503-790-2787 or purchase tickets through www.ticketmaster.com.

"It really is affordable," Despotopulos said. "We've kept prices down. So, if you want to come to enjoy the fair you can do a bunch of stuff for very little money."

For more information on the 2006 Deschutes County Fair, please visit www.expo.deschutes.org.

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