Mark Thursday - Sunday, July 9-12 On Your Calendars…

Clay County Fair Back For Its 107th Annual Run

By: James Kruize

This summer the Clay County Fair will have its 107th fair beginning Thursday July 9 and running through Sunday, July 12. There is always something new and exciting at the county fair for you and your family and friends to enjoy.

During its four-day run, the Clay County Fair is proud to provide Clay County residents, as well as individuals living in the neighboring counties, the opportunity to showcase their livestock, crops and vegetables, and domestic crafts. The Clay County Fair is proud to be the showcase for 4-H and FFA members to exhibit the projects that they have worked on all year-long. The summer festival also offers a wide array of family fun entertainment and educational displays.

Do you have a talent or skill that you are especially proud of? Take an opportunity to show it off at the fair. If you have a flower or vegetable garden, knit, sew, bake, draw or construct something, take photos, or almost any hobby, there is a class in which to exhibit. Bring a pet or farm animal to be judged.

The more exhibitors who participate in the fair and showcase their talents, the better the exhibit area will be at the fair. A bonus to showcasing your talent is getting a ribbon and possibly a small cash prize for your efforts.

Many competitive classes are available, including all varieties of garden and farm produce, floral exhibits, baked and canned goods, sewing, crafts, photography, hobbies and more.

A premium book listing all of the exhibit divisions, classes and lots is slated for publication and online viewing by early June.

One thing that always goes with a county fair is the food. Come out and enjoy the treats of corn dogs, cheese curds, milk shakes and malts, mini donuts, fresh lemonade, tacos/nachos, and many more. A whole variety of delicious cuisine is available for purchase at concessions from Hansen Foods, local non-profit organizations, and the Mighty Thomas Carnival.

The 4-H members of Clay County work on educational projects throughout the year and it all culminates with the annual Clay County fair. The 4-H Building is home to exhibits varying in subject matter from flowers/vegetables to arts and crafts to clothing to photography to wood projects and many more.

The barns on the fairgrounds are filled with animals big and small including rabbits, poultry, beef, dairy, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses.

The Mighty Thomas Carnival is once again bringing back their most popular rides and games to the 107th annual Clay County Fair.

Clay County can be very proud of the livestock at the fair as the barns are full with activity. There are livestock shows each day of the fair.

Come out and support the youth 4-H members by checking out the various exhibits. One learns a lot, and it is great to see the proud and excited 4-H members working with animals or exhibits.

The Clay County FFA members are kept busy during the fair with showcasing their projects, exhibiting livestock, and providing food through their food and shake/malt stand. In addition, they provide a children's barnyard for all fair visitors to see various animals up close. FFA members also participate in a tractor driving contest during the fair.

The educational element of the county fair is one of the most informative aspects. Like many other county fairs across the country, Clay County is pleased to have 4-H and FFA members show off their various exhibits and animal-raising skills.

After walking through the exhibits, relax in the cool shade at the band shelter. It provides for a variety of free entertainment over the four-day fair.

On Thursday, July 9, people of all ages can enjoy the talent contest by competing or enjoying the talent of the participants. The talent show has categories for preteen (age 12 and under), teen (13 – 18 years old), and an open division for any age. Winners of the talent contest have an opportunity to compete at the Minnesota State Fair.

On Friday, July 10, fair visitors have the opportunity to take in magic shows by Magician Tom Anderson, learn about bugs from the "Bug Man" Donald Carey, and take in a visit by the Red River Zoo.

Nashville recording artist Dariann Leigh will perform two free shows on Saturday evening. She comes from the small town of Karlstad, MN. The small-town girl with a big dream, and a big voice is ready to make it happen!

On Saturday, July 11, fair visitors will have the opportunity to witness the 4-H clothing exhibitors demonstrate their runway talents through the 4-H Fashion Revue. Opportunities will exist for getting your balloon animal from Clowning Around with Kim. Sherwin Linton will conclude the evening at the Band Shelter with two free performances.

An Ecumenical Worship Service will start out the day on the band shelter on Sunday, July 12.

The Clay County Fair will have their award ceremonies later in the day recognizing Outstanding Senior Citizens, Clay County Century Farm(s), Outstanding Farm Leaders, Farm Family of the Year, NDSU Harvest Bowl Agriculturalists, Friend of Fair, and Hall of Honor.

Later in the day the 4-H program will present their members with various awards and the open class division will conclude the fair with their Open Class Best of Show Parade.

In addition to the free events available at the band shelter. Many other free activities are available throughout the fair for all ages. Various departments of Clay County government will be on hand under the tent by the 4-H building for Clay County Government Day on Thursday.

Two new events will be held on Thursday this year, including the Touch-a-Truck event in the grandstand area. This event will provide an opportunity for fair visitors to see big trucks up close and personal.

The other new event will be a Jigsaw Puzzle contest which will give teams of up to four members an opportunity to put together a provided puzzle in a set timeframe. Number of teams will be limited so watch for additional details as this event is organized.

A local artist will provide fair visitors an opportunity to participate in hands-on art activities throughout the day on Friday and Saturday. Various demonstrations will be presented throughout the fair.

Clay County FFA chapters will provide free ice cream cones by the Children's Barnyard on Saturday.

Doug Ohman with Pioneer Photography will provide three presentations on different subjects throughout the day on Saturday in the 4-H annex. He is a Minnesota photographer, author and storyteller who has developed entertaining and educational presentations.

The Nickel Scramble will take place for youth on Saturday. The tractor parade where tractors and equipment 1972 or older will arrive at the fairgrounds around 2:30 pm on Saturday.

The Pedal Power Pull will return on Sunday. Winners will be determined by pulling a weighted sled the greatest distance. Bingo will be available all days of the fair at set time periods.

Youth ages 17 and younger will have an opportunity to win a bike on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Historically there have been approximately 12-15 bikes given away each year. The Clay County Fair Board would like to thank the Lions service organizations for the donations of the bikes. It is greatly appreciated. Exact times of the drawings will be listed in the premium book and posted at the fair board office during the fair.

The Conservation Building will feature conservation and agricultural-related booths and programs. The building will also include the Minnesota DNR Wall of Shame trailer and the tractor simulator for all to give a try. Activities in this building are always informative and interesting.

Stop by the one-room school house to get a glimpse of what it was like to be educated in such a school. While there one can participate in an old-fashioned spelling bee.

Many vendors will be located under the grandstand displaying and selling their merchandise. If you are a vendor and interested in having a booth at the Clay County Fair, please contact the fair.

The Modified Tractor Pull will return to the grandstand on Friday, July 10 beginning at 6:30 p.m. This event is presented by the Central Minnesota Pullers. They are happy to announce the addition of improved diesel trucks and 3.0 diesel trucks to their 2020 class lineup.

The popular Demolition Derby will return to the grandstand on Saturday, July 11 beginning at 6:30 p.m. Cars will bump and ram each other until there is only one car still running. Now is the time for potential drivers to starting searching the junkyards and preparing a vehicle for the 2020 competition. Details are still being planned so watch for more information.

For more information on the Modified Tractor Pull or Demolition Derby, please contact grandstand coordinators Chris Bang, 218 790-0053 and Bruce Nelson, 218 329-3030. Admission prices to the grandstand events is $10 for adults 12 years and older and $5 for youth 11 years and younger.

The Ranch Rodeo will return to the North Horse Arena on Sunday, July 12. Additional information including registration information will be available in the premium book.

The Mighty Thomas Carnival will return to the fair. There will be rides to excite as they whirl and twirl through the air for all youngsters and those who are young-at-heart. For those looking for a thrill there is no better place than the Clay County Fair. The midway will also feature various games of skill and chance.

Advance coupon specials will be available in early June through the day before the fair begins at various businesses throughout the county. Watch for the premium book which will identify these businesses.

The Clay County Fair Board works hard to provide an outstanding fair to the county. The Clay County Fair is proud of its long, ongoing history promoting agricultural products, talents and events. This summer, grab family and friends and head to the fair.

Clay County Fair Board Members are Chair Jay Rehder; Vice-Chair Sherrie Berg; Treasurer James Kruize; Directors Jody Johnson-Jackson, Melissa Thune, Lynn Alm, Chris Bang, Bruce Nelson, Paige Griffin, Ryan Hauck, Kristin Grommesh, Sara Stetz and Amber Nord.

The fair is a great place to socialize with friends, enjoy the exhibits, take in a livestock show, or attend any of the free events or grandstand events. There's something for everyone at the Clay County Fair.

Admission into the Clay County Fair is free and parking is only $2/vehicle per day or $5/vehicle for all days of the fair.

For more information on events, please review the premium book which will be available in publication and online in early June, the fair tabloid to be distributed later this spring, or like them on Facebook at mnclaycountyfair.

One of the newer events of the Clay County Fair is the Antique Tractor Parade. The parade is for tractors and equipment 1972 or before. Line up starts at the parking lot of the Barnesville Bus Garage south of town on Saturday afteroon. The parade heads up Fifth Street then turns right on Second Avenue, heading onto the fairgrounds where the tractors are parked on display.

From pizza to tacos, fresh lemonade to slushies, fair-goers will have a hard time deciding what to eat first.

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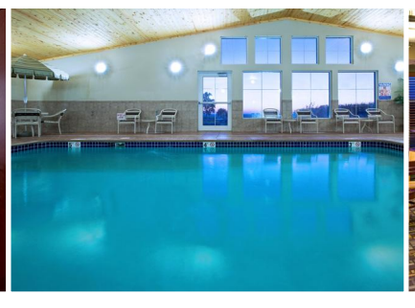

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