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August 30-
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New buildings and more await fair goers



Noah Wendorff, a member of the Wolf River 4-H, puts some fresh sawdust in cages in the small animal barn. In a few days, the barn will be filled with chickens, rabbits, geese, ducks, turkeys and more.

LEE PULASKI | NEW MEDIA

On the midway, 90-foot Ferris wheel will tower over new vendors, visitors

By **LEE PULASKI**
City Editor

The smell of cows, cotton candy, cream puffs and cheese curds combining in the air can only mean one thing — it's time for the Shawano County Fair.

Visitors who make the annual pilgrimage to the fairgrounds in Shawano every Labor Day weekend can expect to see more animal entries and more exhibits than seen in recent memory, according to Brad Luepke, the fair's marketing and promotions director, and there will be a couple of new buildings for folks to go through.

Last winter, a new, permanent building for bingo was built facing Green Bay Street, eliminating the tent

that used to house the popular games played throughout the fair.

"It's a beautiful building, and we're lucky to have been able to put up two new buildings in the off-season," Luepke said.

Completed recently is a new barn next to the Crawford Center for the horse exhibits. The previous barn was in poor condition and needed updating, which it got through a generous donation from the Huntington family, which also made the 4-H exhibit building possible a few years ago.

"That will definitely be a landscape changer for the fair, because it towers over the back stretch," Luepke said, noting that the fair board paid for the building itself, while the stalls were through the Huntingtons. "The old one

was a little creaky in the wind, but this is a good upgrade."

Buildings are not the only new things folks will see at the fair this year. For folks that love the Ferris wheel, the 55-foot one that has been commonplace for years is being replaced with Vertigo, which Luepke said is 90 feet tall.

"It will be far and away the tallest ride we've ever had at the county fair," he said. "We were at a fair convention in January, and Rainbow Valley, who does our rides, approached us and said: 'We've got a new ride, and we want to bring it to your fair.' It's definitely going to change the landscape of the fair, especially at night."

New vendors are also on the horizon on the midway. Ben's Pretzels,

a common sight for folks going to Camp Randall, will be making its debut in Shawano County, according to Luepke. Primal Eats from the Gillett area will also be bringing its food truck with a variety of carnivorous treats, and folks will be able to wash them down with cold or hot drinks from Brewed, a company based in Clintonville.

The Shawano County Fair is also stepping up in the world in terms of celebrity guests. Miss Wisconsin, Lila Szyryj, will be visiting the fair from 4-9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, helping out the Fairest of the Fair, Mandi McClone, with the livestock auction and a variety of other fair events.

"That's going to be really cool. I don't think that's ever happened

before,” Luepke said. “It was a neat opportunity to bring her in. She’s going to be all around the grounds. We’re pretty excited to have her here.”

Luepke also said there’s a possibility that Karlee Ziemer, who is Miss Wisconsin American Strong, will also be making an appearance, but details are still being worked out.

Previously, the fair has provided popular bands behind the grandstand on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, but with the fireworks show on Thursday nights getting more popular, Luepke said it is getting more entertainment on Thursday, as well. This year’s band is Eight Second Ride, a country band from Green Bay.

“We’re excited to have them on stage on Thursday, and they’re probably the biggest band we’ve had on a Thursday night,” Luepke said. “They play in our area quite a bit.”

Boom Boxx will be playing on Friday, which Luepke noted was very entertaining in Bonduel when the band played on Independence Day. Cherry Pie will provide some hair-raising fun on Saturday night, while the ever-popular Star Six Nine rounds out the main stage lineup on Sunday night.

“Our lineup for the main stage is really strong,” Luepke said.

The midway stage will be hopping as well with Country Rewind and Thunder Country performing among the food vendors and carnival rides. However, Beer Goggles had to step out due to a medical emergency, so Luepke is looking for a last-minute replacement band for Sunday.

President’s Park will continue to echo the polka tunes common for this area with eight different bands performing over a five-day period, as well as a polka Mass at 11 a.m. Sunday. For those who can’t make that service, a contemporary church service is taking place at 9:30 a.m. on the main stage.

“We wanted to promote a different lineup, so we got a bunch of new bands in there,” Luepke said.

One polka group Luepke is excited about is Zanders Music Makers.

“They are a three-piece band with a drummer, and there’s a concertina player who is 11 years old, and the other one is his sister, which is 10 years old,” he said. “They’re up and comers.”

Making a return to the farm bureau stage in the 4-H building is Jeff Michaels, a local hypnotist who brings a family friendly show to packed crowds.

Musical entertainment aside, the fair is also going to be holding a dart and cornhole tournament in the Crawford Center starting at 11 a.m. Sept. 2. Luepke said that a younger member of the fair board pitched the idea, and it



A new horse barn will greet visitors to the Shawano County Fair. The Huntington family provided the stalls for the spacious barn, one of two new buildings the fair has built in the last year.

LEE PULASKI | NEW MEDIA



Local 4-H families work together Aug. 19 to help set up the stage in the Huntington 4-H Building. Dozens of people flocked to the fairgrounds to get it set up for Shawano County’s biggest event of the year.

LEE PULASKI | NEW MEDIA

drew some enthusiastic support.

“We’re going to get some dart machines in the Crawford Center and some cornhole boards,” Luepke said. “It’s just \$20 to get in.”

Luepke has been hyping up excitement for the fair in August by placing fair passes in various spots around the county and encouraging a scavenger hunt. He’s got other things in the works for promotion, but he noted that many of them come on the fly.

“You never know when we’re going

to be doing something,” Luepke said.

Besides the commercial food vendors, there are plenty of nonprofits that operate stands on the midway, and they make a killing each year, according to Luepke.

“That’s probably their biggest fundraiser of the year,” he said. “We want to make sure to give them the platform that they are able to get the most funds for their nonprofit as possible. They’re part of our community, and we’re driven to make our community better.”

Community support is what has made the fair successful since the early days, in Luepke’s view. As the marketing director, he finds it very easy when he goes around to area businesses to get the word “yes” to his requests for support.

“I’m excited for what we’ve done this year with the new buildings and everything,” Luepke said. “We have a lot to be thankful for.”

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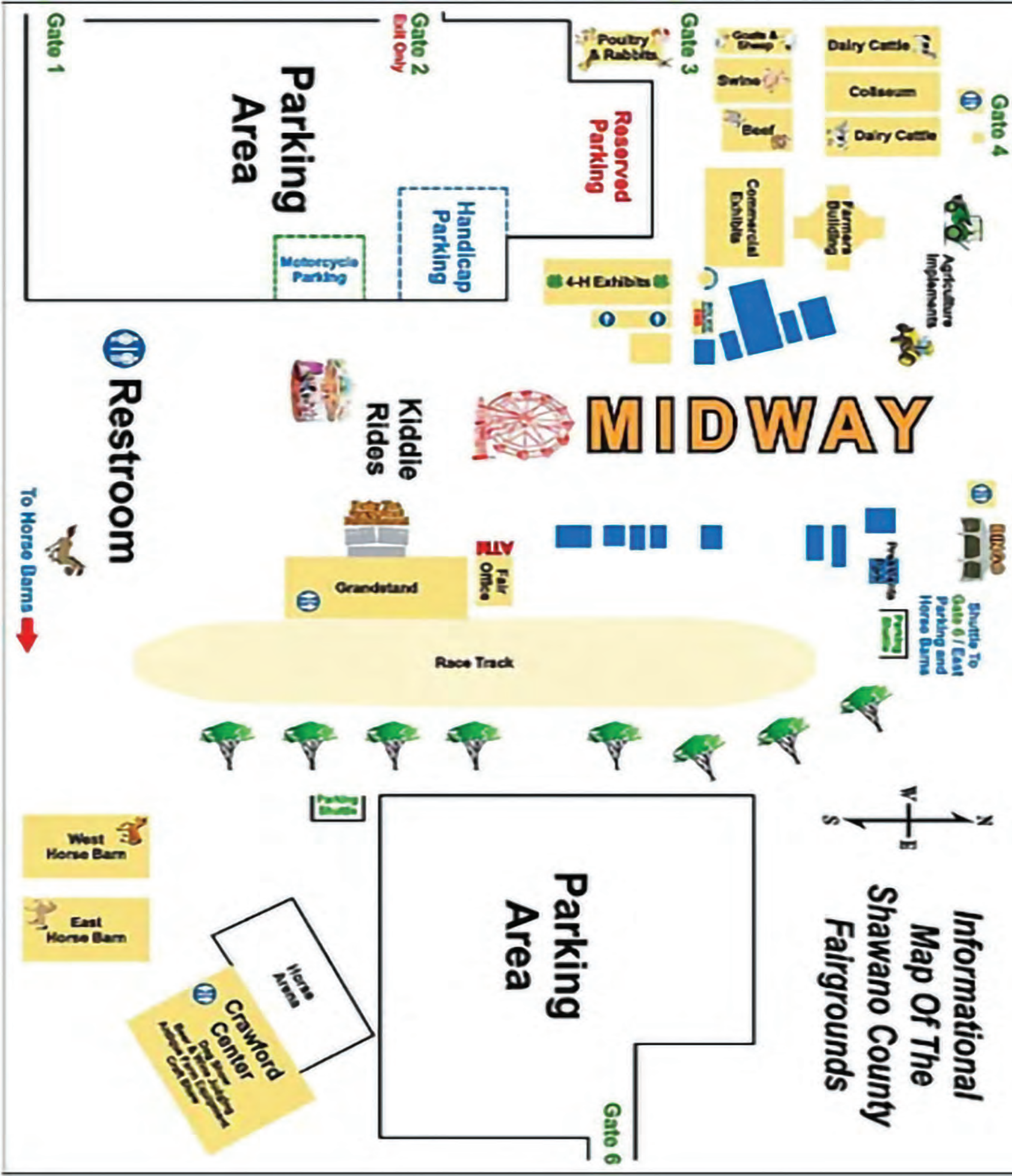
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PROGRESSIVE
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READER INSIGHTS



Sunday night best time for county fair

For most folks, the most wonderful time of the year revolves around a specific holiday. Christmas immediately springs to mind, with Thanksgiving and Halloween also being deemed acceptable answers.

However, for many folks in Shawano County, the most wonderful time of the year is Labor Day. Why that holiday? Because that means the Shawano County Fair is just around the corner, and with that comes the carnival rides, animal exhibits, musical performances and seeing up close and personal why this county is such a haven for agriculture.

The fair lasts for six days, but unless you've got animals entered, you're usually not there the whole time. Some folks might make several trips to the fair for specific events, but many usually can only find time to be there one day. Some like the idea of being there when it's bumper to bumper people, while others prefer perusing the grounds and the exhibits without the risk of getting mowed down by the crowd.

When I'm just checking out the fair on my own time, I prefer the quieter times when I can look at things without worrying that I might be in someone's way. After 12 years of covering the local fair, I can tell you that Sunday night is usually your best bet if you're like me and want to enjoy things at your own pace.

The lines are shorter Sunday nights, for one thing, and one tradition for me is going up on the Ferris wheel. Sure, there are better days and deals for those who love going on the rides, but I like to be able to go up and view the fairgrounds at night, marveling at the tranquility of it all. This year should be very interesting as the fair is bringing a wheel called Vertigo, almost double in height, so it should provide a different view of below than in years past.

**Lee
Pulaski**
City Editor



If you like shooting the animals like I do (with a camera, just in case the hunters reading this column are getting the wrong idea), then Sunday night is a great time to do it. With fewer people moving through the barns, photographers can wait for the best shots without worry that they're clogging up traffic. Animals can be unpredictable, so if you want a shot of a pig looking through the bars at the camera, it requires time and patience.

Sunday night doesn't prevent you from enjoying fair food. If anything, the hunger is satiated faster because of, as I mentioned before, shorter lines. You can enjoy the cheese curds, burgers and more.

Sunday night still provides entertainment. Star Six Nine will be performing on the main stage behind the grandstand, but it'll be easier to get to the main stage because the grounds aren't as crowded.

I also like Sunday nights because the setting sun brings cooler temperatures. The Shawano County Fair has a habit of taking place during one of the hottest times of the year, so while there are days where the attendance is lower and you get more elbow room, it's more fun to see the fairgrounds all lit up at night.

Don't get me wrong. I like seeing some of the other events that take place over the six days of the fair. Folks with kids enjoy the livestock



The view of the Shawano County Fair from the Ferris wheel can be an awesome one, especially at night. This year, the 90 feet tall Vertigo will provide a different view.

FILE | NEW MEDIA

auction, along with the animal judging that occurs during the day. Some folks enjoy the sound of polka and frequent President's Park when the bands are playing. The cake decorating auction is a good event to watch, at least for the food vendors, because it tends to make folks hungry.

In the end, you can go check out the

fair anytime you like, but if you enjoy going when there's not blistering heat and long lines, Sunday night is your best bet. Grab your cream puffs and buckle up, because the 2023 Shawano County Fair should be quite a ride.

Lee Pulaski is the city editor for NEW Media. Readers can contact him at lpulaski@newmedia-wi.com

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

COMMERCIAL BUILDING HOURS: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 30

5 P.M.: Open Dog Show, Crawford Center
6 P.M.: Opening Ceremonies, Veterans Park
6 P.M.: Midway rides begin
6 P.M.: Cat Junior Show, Huntington 4-H Building
6:30 P.M.: County Truck and Tractor Pulls, grandstand

THURSDAY, AUG. 31

8:30 A.M.: Swine Show, Junior and Open Swine, Coliseum
4 P.M.: Junior Sheep Show, Coliseum
5 P.M.: Midway rides begin, wristband night
5 P.M.: Bingo, Bingo Building
6 P.M.: Wine and Beer Judging, Crawford Center
6 P.M.: Junior and Open Goat Show, Coliseum
7 P.M.: Eight Second Ride band, main stage
7 P.M.: Neal Zunker Band, President's Park
8:30 P.M.: Fireworks Over the Fair, grandstand

FRIDAY, SEPT. 1

8 A.M.: Junior Market Beef Show, Coliseum
9 A.M.: Junior and Open Rabbit Show, Small Animal Building
11 A.M.: Junior and Open Beef Feeder/Breeder Show, Coliseum
12:30 P.M.: Bingo, Bingo Building
1 P.M.: Zanders Music Makers, President's Park
3 P.M.: Horse Trail Class, Horse Barns
4 P.M.: Outlaw Junkies Band, midway stage
5 P.M.: Decorated Cake Auction, Huntington 4-H Building
5 P.M.: Midway rides begin, wristband night
6:30 P.M.: Market Animal Auction, Coliseum
7 P.M.: Chad Przybylski, President's Park

SATURDAY, SEPT. 2

9 A.M.: Junior and Open Poultry Show, Small Animal Building
9 A.M.: Junior Dairy Cattle Show, Coliseum
9 A.M.: Junior and Open Horse Show, Horse Arena
11 A.M.: Cornhole and Dart Tourney, Crawford Center
NOON: Jeff Michaels, Huntington 4-H Building
NOON: midway rides begin
12:30 P.M.: Bingo, Bingo Building
1 P.M.: Polka Dynamics Band, President's Park
2 P.M.: Jeff Michaels, Huntington 4-H Building

4 P.M.: Jeff Michaels, Huntington 4-H Building
5 P.M.: Thunder Country, midway stage

6 P.M.: Stock Car Races, grandstand
7 P.M.: Dairy Futurity Show, Coliseum
8 P.M.: The Mix Polka Band, President's Park

8:30 P.M.: Cherry Pie band, main stage

SUNDAY, SEPT. 3

8 A.M.: Junior Horse Show, Horse Arena
9:30 A.M.: St. James church service, main stage
10 A.M.: Open Dairy Show, Coliseum
11 A.M.: Polka Mass, President's Park
NOON: Pee Wee Dairy Show, Coliseum
NOON: Midway rides begin, wristband noon to 5 p.m.

NOON: Kiddie Tractor Pull, main stage
12:30 P.M.: Bingo, Bingo Building
1 P.M.: Jeff Michaels, Huntington 4-H Building

1 P.M.: Demolition Derby, grandstand
1 P.M.: Jerry Voelker Band, President's Park

3 P.M.: Jeff Michaels, Huntington 4-H Building

5 P.M.: Beer Goggles Band, midway stage

7 P.M.: New Generation, President's Park

7:30 P.M.: Star Six Nine Band, main stage

MONDAY, SEPT. 4

9 A.M.: Fun Small Animal Events, Coliseum

10 A.M.: Small Animal Auction, Coliseum

10:30 A.M.: Horse Drill Team Show, Horse Arena

11 A.M.: Fun Day Horse Show, Horse Arena

NOON: Midway rides begin, wristband day

NOON: Demolition Derby, Grandstand

12:30 P.M.: Bingo, Bingo Building

1 P.M.: Live Wire, President's Park

4 P.M.: All dairy cattle and horses released

4:30 P.M.: All other animals released

6 P.M.: 4-H and open fair exhibits released

ADMISSION PRICES

GATE ADMISSION

Wednesday, \$3 per person

Thursday through Monday, \$5 per person 11 and younger free

PARKING

Wednesday, free

Thursday through Monday, \$5 per car

SEASON PASS

\$20 includes admission and parking

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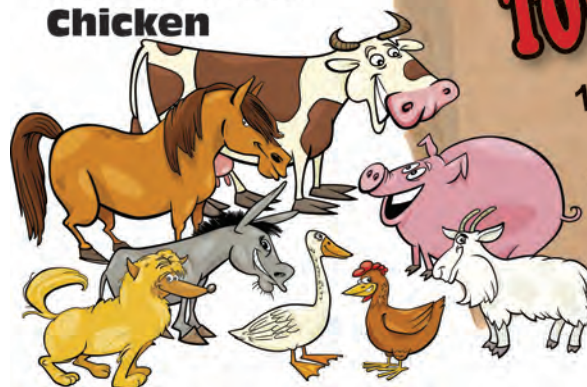
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CHERRY PIE SATURDAY | 8:30PM
STAR SIX NINE SUNDAY | 7:30PM

GRANDSTAND EVENTS

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FIREWORKS OVER THE FAIR THURSDAY | 8:30PM
STOCK CAR RACES SATURDAY 6PM
DEMOLITION DERBY SUNDAY | 1PM
 MONDAY | NOON

MIDWAY STAGE
COUNTRY REWIND FRIDAY | 4PM
THUNDER COUNTRY SATURDAY | 5PM
BEER GOGGLES SUNDAY | 5PM

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 FRIDAY | ZANDERS MUSIC MAKERS | 1PM
 CHAD PRZYBYLSKI | 7PM
 SATURDAY | POLKA DYNAMICS | 1PM
 THE MIX | 8PM
 SUNDAY | POLKA MASS | 11AM
 JERRY VOELKER | 1PM
 NEW GENERATION | 7PM
 MONDAY | LIVE WIRE | 1PM

AROUND THE FAIR
 BEER & WINE JUDGING - 6PM | THURSDAY
 DECORATED CAKE AUCTION - 5PM | FRIDAY
 LIVESTOCK AUCTION - 6PM | FRIDAY
 KIDDIE TRACTOR PULL - NOON | SATURDAY
 CHURCH AT THE FAIR
 ST. JAMES LUTHERAN | 9:30AM | SUNDAY
 POLKA MASS | 11AM | SUNDAY
 SMALL ANIMAL AUCTION - 10AM | MONDAY

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 FRIDAY - SUNDAY | 12:30 - 9PM
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ADMISSION

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Parking

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Season Pass

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Senior Citizen Day | Friday, September 1

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