

# Adventures to Explore in 2024

## August 13-18



VOL. 30 | NO. 3 | December 2023

## ★ Kozelka's Korner ★

### “Satisfaction Guaranteed in 2023”

Mission accomplished Steele County. Satisfaction Guaranteed was completed and the 2023 Steele County Free Fair is in the books.

First, I would like to THANK the wonderful spouses and families of our staff, SCFF Board of Directors and Grounds Crew. Your willingness to share your family members with us throughout the year and during the fair allows us to have the BEST County Fair in the State of Minnesota.

We wouldn't be able to put on this great event each year without the GREAT TEAMWORK we have from so many throughout our cities and county. The next time you see one of the following team members, please help me by saying THANK YOU for everything they do to help with our great Steele County Free Fair: Steele County Commissioners, County Staff, Steele County Highway Department, Steele County Sheriff's Department, Owatonna Police Department, Owatonna Park & Rec. Department, Owatonna Street Department and the many others who help from our cities of Medford, Ellendale, Blooming Prairie, and all of the townships in Steele County.

Every role is important, yet none is as important as keeping us safe. Special thanks to Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele for his efforts in coordinating the safety needs throughout

the fair not only to keep fairgoers and the fair safe but to also keep our cities and county safe. THANK YOU, your team and your law enforcement colleagues for all that you do.

I say this every year, but this year more than ever, THANK YOU to ALL our AMAZING SPONSORS and PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS. Without every one of you, we would not be able to have a Free Fair, and we also wouldn't be able to provide the variety and quality entertainment that our team does year after year. Please note the list of sponsors on our website, SCFF.org, and thank them for partnering with the fair the next time you visit their place of business or workplace.

There are so many to thank and it is never my intention to leave anyone out. Please accept my heartfelt THANKS and apologies to those I may have missed. Know that you are appreciated.

Work is underway for the 2024 Steele County Free Fair. Please reach out with new ideas, questions, or concerns. Our fair continues to improve when we hear from you. Get ready for all the “ADVENTURES TO EXPLORE IN 2024”. Enjoy your winter, Happy Holidays and I will see you at the Steele County Free Fair, August 13-18, 2024.

Scott Kozelka – SCFF Manager

## Steele County Free Fair Barker

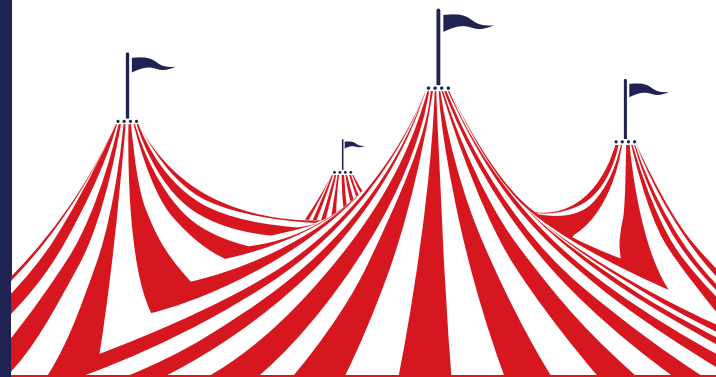
# ★ Steele County Agricultural Society ★ Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Steele County Agricultural Society was held November 2, 2023 at the Steele County Community Center. Steele County Free Fair Manager Scott Kozelka presented his annual report as did treasurer Tim Arlt.

The following incumbents were elected to each serve a 3-year term as Director:

Jim Abbe, Tim Arlt, Mark Ditlevson, Rick Ellingson, Glen Meger, and Brent Svenby.

At the November Steele County Free Fair Board Meeting, which followed the annual meeting, Dan Deml was re-elected as President, Wayne Steele as Vice-President, and Tim Arlt as Treasurer of the Board. Tracy Ignaszewski was appointed the Extension Service Member on the Board.



## ★ SCFF Office Information ★

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[steelecountyfreefair@scff.org](mailto:steelecountyfreefair@scff.org)

If you would like to receive your Barker Newsletter by e-mail, please contact us and we will be happy to add you to the list.

## ★ SCFF Gives Back \$43.6K to Local Nonprofits ★

By Annie Harman/Owatonna People's Press

It has been no secret that the 2023 Steele County Free Fair was a great success. With income up, little to no incidents during the week and a new building on the horizon, the Fair Board has a lot to be proud of during the post-fair season.

But if you ask Fair Manager Scott Kozelka, there is one specific thing the group should truly be proud of.

During Thursday night's meeting of the Fair Board, Director Jim Abbe presented Annette Duncan, president of the United Way of Steele County, with a gift on behalf of the SCFF. To thank UWSC for all of the hard work done by its volunteers — especially in the grandstand — the SCFF donated a total of \$4,675 to the nonprofit's capital campaign.

That donation is one of many donations made by the SCFF since the end of the 2023 event. According to Kozelka, the fair has cut donation checks to more than 30 local nonprofits, ranging from youth sports associations to churches and everything in between.

“If you are going to be proud of anything, this is what you should be proud of,” Kozelka said.

In total, the fair donated \$43,621 to local nonprofits.



Jim Abbe, director with the Steele County Free Fair, presents United Way of Steele County President Annette Duncan with a check for \$4,675. The donation to the UWSC capital campaign is to say “Thank you” for all the hard work UWSC volunteers did during fair week.

# ★ News, Notes and Fair Fun Facts From the 2023 Fair ★

- ★ 2087 visitors enjoyed the Muckle Museum during fair week.
- ★ 8593 people visited the Fine Arts display during fair week.
- ★ 13,086 people visited the House Auto Group Auto Museum which featured Corvettes. The 2024 Auto Museum will feature Thunderbirds.
- ★ 1033 exhibitors entered 4187 open class entries; 1903 of these entries were made online.
- ★ 1805 4-H projects, including animals, were exhibited at the fair.
- ★ The Courtesy Shuttles assisted fairgoers by providing 1676 rides.

## ★ Steele County Free Fair Evaluations Food Winners ★



### Most Popular Food At The Fair:

Cindy Nachos - Grace's

### Most Unique Product:

Extreme Shake - Just Take the Cake Too

### Best Bargain:

Agave Twinkie - Agave Express

### Best Appearance Stand:

Texas Bayou Billy Tea

### Spiciest Food:

Spice of Life with  
"Kick You in the Mouth Sauce"  
- Little Blue Elephant

### Rookie of the Year:

Little Blue Elephant

### Most Customer Friendly:

Sirloin Steak Tips

### Best International Food:

Cravin' Asian

### Best Dessert:

Amish Annie Donut

### Best Service:

Aurora Food Stand



## ★ Kids Pedal Pull Winners ★

- Age 4: Elle - Owatonna, MN
- Age 5: Gus - Rochester, MN
- Age 6: Brinley - Hanlontown, MN
- Age 7: Axel - Kasson, MN
- Age 8: Allison - Lanesboro, IA
- Age 9: Bailey - Hanlontown, MN
- Age 10: Cayden - St. Charles, MN
- Age 11: Layli - Eyota, MN

131 youth participated in the pedal pull this year

## ★ SCFF Evaluations Rides Winners ★

- Best Lit: Insanity 360
- Best Kid Ride: Wacky Worm
- Best Adult Ride: Insanity 360

## ★ SCFF Evaluations Games Winners ★

- Best Lit Game: Monkey Maze
- Best Prizes: Prize Factory
- Best Kids Game: Rising Water
- Best Adult Game: Dozer

## ★ GoldStar Midway Top 10 Rides ★

1. Century Wheel
2. Alpine Bobs
3. State Fair Slide
4. Tilt-a-Whirl
5. Sizzler
6. Wacky Worm
7. Re-Mix
8. Musik Express
9. Merry-go-Round
10. Scooters

## ★ More Details from 2023 ★



### ★ Mega Ride Tickets ★

Mega Ride ticket sales once again set a record for number of tickets sold with **6,453** tickets being sold at Owatonna Hy-Vee prior to the start of the fair.

### ★ Bike Winners ★

8 bikes were given away as part of the Profinium, Inc. Saturday Ride Special during the fair. This year's winners were:

John from Owatonna, MN  
William from Austin, MN  
Jule from Waseca, MN  
Grant from Owatonna, MN  
Jason from Chaska, MN  
Dustin from Owatonna, MN  
Steve from Owatonna, MN  
Lisa from Des Moines, IA



### ★ Grandstand 2023 ★

Grandstand entertainment included Antique Tractor Pull, LOCASH w/ special guest Drake Milligan, Hairball w/ special guest Strange Daze, Craig Morgan w/ special guest Ashley Barron, Bulls N Barrels and Demolition Derby.

### ★ Church Service Collections ★

A total of **\$1,841.35** was collected during the church services held in the Village of Yesteryear and in Fair Square Park on Sunday of the Fair. This donation was divided evenly to support Transitional Housing and Community Pathways.

### ★ SCFF Awards ★

#### ★ Open Class Photography Department Results

*Gladys Wavrin Award for Best Photo:*

Richard Calson

*People's Choice Award:* Guy Walburn

#### ★ Culinary Arts Department Results

*Junior Ruler of the Kitchen:*

Jaycie Smith

*Adult Ruler of the Kitchen:* Beth DeCoux

*Monica Kruschke Special Award:*

Betsy Born

#### ★ Fine Arts - People's Choice Award:

Tim Hage

#### ★ Youth Art - People's Choice Award:

Joyden Knopik & Libbie Finholdt



Richard Calson



### ★ Major Improvements in 2023 ★

Major Improvements completed in 2023 included restroom updates, windows in the Great Outdoors Center, new roof on the swine barn and shop, new sand in horse arena and cattle show arena, upgrades to Mother's Rest, and new garage door on the shop building.

### ★ Free Attractions Enjoyed ★

Some of the Free Attractions for fair goers to see at the fair were All-Star Stunt Dogs, Thorni Ridge Exotics Petting Zoo, Moogician, The High Flying Pages, Southwest Mobile Dairy Classroom, Robinson Carving Company, Jurassic Kingdom, MAW Wrestling, The Electrifying Magic of Jay Mattioli, Hot Glass Academy, and Antique Old Iron Show.



## ★ IAFE Award ★

### We are 1st place WINNERS!

Our fair took the 1st place award for “A Newly Established Agriculture Exhibit” in recognition for the traveling Ag Learning lab put together by the Steele County 4H who partnered with Waseca, Rice & Freeborn Counties who worked together to create a traveling Ag Education Exhibit for their fairs. Thank you, Traci Ignaszewski, for submitting the Application!

The SCFF was also received 2nd place awards for Agricultural Individual Photo: Horticulture/Crops and Agricultural Individual Photo: Ag Education.

## ★ Stephanie Dietz-Gill Named SCFF Assistant Manager ★



Hi, I’m Stephanie and I’ll be working with Scott and the rest of the SCFF team to bring an incredible fair experience in 2024! As a lifelong lover of the SCFF, I’m looking forward to learning as much as I can about what goes into delivering this legendary event each year, preserving our great traditions, and creating new experiences for fair goers. Working with our vendors and 4-H will be two of my focuses this first year, learning the ins and outs and supporting them prior to and during the week of the fair. I’m really looking forward to the insight that I’ll have next September and the ideas that will come from seeing the process come full circle. I’m ready to jump in, learn all that I can and help where I’m needed. This new role is one that I plan to make my own, I think the possibilities are endless and I can’t wait to see where it leads me.

See you at the fair!  
Stephanie

## ★ Memorials and Donations ★

### Donations Received:

Tim & Deb Art  
B & D Greek Foods  
Darrell Bauder  
Bruce & Rhonda Bennett  
Milo & Laurie Dahlin  
Denise & Grant Duffy  
Robert Everett  
FOE AERIE 1791-for the Great Outdoors Center  
Federated Employee Match  
Jeremy & Emily Saufferer

### Memorials Received:

In memory of Marilyn “Zack” Zacharias-Former Fair Board Director  
The family of Marilyn Zacharias  
Mike Hamilton  
Sharon Klein

In memory of Karla Ihrke-Former Culinary Arts Superintendent  
Jeff & Michelle Carlson  
Denise & Grant Duffy  
Sandy Jirele  
Melissa & Tony Karl  
Sharon Klein  
Jerome Spindler

In memory of Carolyn Tande-Friend of the Fair  
Dan & Vickie Deml

In memory of Lori Wanous-Friend of the Fair  
Jerome Spindler

In memory of Mike Pierce-Superintendent of Shuttle Service  
Bruce & BJ Busho  
Dan & Vickie Deml  
Allan & Randee Radel

In memory of Roxy Stordahl-A Beloved “Stella”  
Sandy Jirele  
Sharon Klein

In memory of Roger Deml  
Allan & Randee Radel

In memory of Shelly Deml  
Allan & Randee Radel

In memory of Pat Keher  
Allan & Randee Radel

In memory of Larry Tande  
Allan & Randee Radel

In memory of Marvin Edel-Father of Carol Rypka  
Lois & David Janke

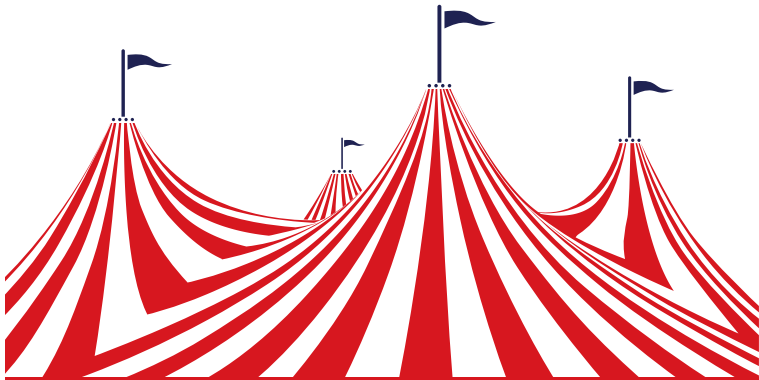
In memory of Dick Reinhardt  
Dave, Steve, & Jim Reinhardt

In memory of Elmer Reseland  
Alice Reseland



Steele County Free Fair  
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Owatonna, MN 55060

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Join Us This Year  
August 13-18, 2024

★ [scff.org](http://scff.org) ★



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from the Steele County Free Fair Board of Directors & Staff