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FAYETTE COUNTY FAIR BACK IN ACTION, PLANNING FOR BANNER YEAR

Uniontown, PA – Ask anyone in Fayette County for advice on the best places to go in July, and there's one answer that probably will be repeated again and again: the fair.

The Fayette County Fair's history goes all the way back to 1958, when the very first one was held on the fairgrounds in Dunbar Township. One of the largest fairs in Pennsylvania, the Fayette County Fair draws about 100,000 visitors annually.

Its popularity and longevity earn the Fayette County Fair this month's Faces and Places designation.

The fair hit a snag last year when, like so many other large-scale events, it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the Fayette County Fair is back in full force this year, with 10 days of contests, concerts, 4-H events, and of course, fair food scheduled from today through Aug. 7.

Board President Bill Jackson said everyone seems excited to see the fair returning.

"I think, from everything I'm hearing, people are looking forward to it," he said. "I think advance tickets are selling at a very brisk pace, maybe better than usual."

The public's anticipation of the event has nothing on that of the people who actually are showing and competing at the fair. Just ask 10-year 4-H member Isabel Poorbaugh. The 17-year-old Bullsken Township native said she is "super excited" to be back at the fair, as are the other 4-H members.

"You don't realize how much you miss it until you don't have it," she said. "We're really itching for it to be back this year."

Poorbaugh shows market lambs, pigs and steers. This year, she also has raised two breeding lambs, as well as a carcass lamb and a carcass steer. She also enters projects into the creative arts side of 4-H.

Board member and 4-H Educator Jennifer Deichert said there are plenty of activities for Poorbaugh and the others to take part in this year.

"In the youth building, we're repeating some things we've had before, such as Williams Energy's geocaching," she said. "I know we're doing a few different twists."

Deichert said there will be a different theme at the fair each day, and there also will be theme days in the 4-H community. For instance, Friday is Animal Science Day and Saturday is Creative Arts Day. Members of the 4-H community might have Crazy Sock Day or some other fun designation.

“We are just looking for ways for 4-H members to have fun and be able to recognize each other as they walk through the fair,” Deichert said.

The fair will offer 4-H members an opportunity to take part in everything from STEM activities like robotics to gardening and environmental sciences.

Deichert said 4-H also will be promoting some upcoming projects, such as a camp slated for the end of August and a photo contest.

Poorbaugh said she thinks there will be more than the normal amount of 4-H entries because members had so much time at home to work on projects and now, they will be excited to show off what they’ve done.

“I feel like this year is going to be even better,” she said.

Their hard work will culminate during the annual 4-H Livestock Auction, taking place on Friday, August 6, at 5:00 p.m.

For those who aren’t a part of 4-H, the Fayette County Fairs offers a long list of other events. Board member Danielle Angelo, co-chair of the entertainment committee, said this year’s fair will provide a mix of favorite acts as well as a few that are new and different.

“Of course, we have (country artist) Lauren Alaina coming this year. That’s our big artist,” Angelo said. “The Fabulous Hubcaps are coming back. They’re always popular; I think they’ve been coming here for over 20 years. The Clarks always draw a big crowd. We’re definitely excited about them.”

Those acts will perform on the Lady Luck Stage, with the Mike Kelly Toyota Stage reserved for local acts, including Katelyn Rose.

“We’re excited about the family area,” Angelo said. “We have the pig races and the petting zoo, and we have a great act that’s fairly new called Hog Diggity Dog. They’re out of Sarasota, Fla., and they do some tricks with giant hogs and dogs. They’re fairly new to the fair industry. They were part of Ringling before.”

Angelo said the fair also will welcome the locally based Wild World of Animals, as well as Agricadabra, an agricultural magic show.

It wouldn’t be the Fayette County Fair without the carnival from longtime provider Powers Great American Midways. And let’s not forget the many vendors and sellers of scrumptious food options from sausage sandwiches to funnel cakes.

Jackson said the only fair in the area that takes place before Fayette’s is the Big Butler Fair, and if turnout there was any indication, the Fayette County Fair could be in for a banner year.

“Everything points to great attendance, and so far, the weather doesn’t look too bad for it.”

Early bird admission to the fair is \$13 for those attending between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and is available on weekdays only, not including opening day. Regular admission is \$15 and includes rides, as well as outdoor and indoor arena entertainment.

For more information on events and tickets, visit the website at www.fayettefair.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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