



VOL. 31 | NO. 4 | July 2025

★ Kozelka's Korner ★

It's GO TIME! The countdown is ON for this year's fair, "Good Vibes in 2025", August 12 – 17, 2025 at our Steele County Free Fair grounds. Our board of directors and staff have worked hard to make this year's fair the best that it can be and we can't wait for you to join us.

Be sure to check out Big Daddy Weave with special guest Cochren & Co Wednesday evening on the Daikin Grandstand Stage. Thanks to Kinship Radio/Owatonna Area Christian Radio for co-sponsoring this exciting new evening of Christian music.

Two new circus acts will also be joining the fair this year. Enjoy Lew-E's Comedy Circus, sponsored by State Farm, Culligan Ultrapure and HomeTown Credit Union, and Cowboy Circus, brought to us by Kottke Jewelers and Owatonna Hy-Vee. Oh, and returning to the fair for the enjoyment of all are the "Squeals on Wheels" Pig Races sponsored by KRFO and KAT Kountry. These acts and

more are free for you to enjoy at the fair. Make your plans today!

I hope that this addition of The Barker fires you up for the fair! We are excited to welcome new major sponsors to the fair, including Marthaler Honda, James Brothers Construction, Snell Motors, Culligan Ultrapure and Knutson & Casey, along with our many other new and longtime sponsors. We would not have the fair that we do without our generous sponsors. I encourage you to support them whenever you can.

See You at the Fair!

Scott Kozelka
Steele County Free Fair Manager

Steele County Free Fair Barker

★ News and Notes ★



Wanted: Steely and Stella Volunteers

Our beloved fair mascots, Steely and Stella, are so busy that they need more help.

If you are interested in “joining the herd”, please contact Denise at the Steele County Free Fair, steelecountyfreefair@scff.org or 507-451-5305, for more information and an application.

Steely and Stella volunteer “for the love of the fair” and attend parades and events throughout the year.

2nd Annual “Best of the Fair” Food Competition

Which food vendor will bring the best new food to this year’s fair?

Check out the second annual competition on **Wednesday, August 13, at 3:00 PM on Wenger Fair Square Stage.**



★ Exhibitor’s Guide Goes Online ★

As technology continues to be a part of our everyday lives, the Steele County Free Fair Staff looks for opportunities to work more efficiently. This year’s Exhibitors Guide is 100% online with newly formatted and easier to read pages.



Scan the QR code for the 2025 Exhibitor Guide.

Flagpole Garden in Front of Steele Saloon

Thanks to the Steele County Master Gardeners and the Owatonna VFW Post 3723 for enhancing the area in front of the Steele Saloon with flowers and the flagpole and flag.



Parking

As you enter the Steele County Free Fair Parking lot off of 18th Street to enjoy the fair, you will not be given a daily parking ticket. Guests will simply pay **\$5.00** to enter the lot. If a guest leaves the parking lot and returns later that day, they will pay \$5.00 to park again. Parking on the grounds is one of the best bargains of the fair, even with this change.

Steele County Agricultural Society Membership

★ **ON SALE NOW!** ★

One of the best bargains at the fair is membership in the Steele County Agricultural Society! For \$5.00 per person members receive this quarterly fair newsletter, The Barker, and have voting rights at the annual meeting in November. **RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY** by stopping in the Steele County Free Fair Office, open Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM and in the Fair Bank from 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM the week of the fair, August 12-17. Be sure to purchase your membership for 2025-26 before the 8:00 PM deadline on Sunday, August 17, 2025, the final day of the fair.

★ News and Notes ★

★ Mega Ride Tickets on Sale NOW! ★

The always popular Mega Ride Ticket, good for unlimited rides on the GoldStar Midway throughout the fair, are on sale now exclusively at Owatonna Hy-Vee until 5:00 PM on Tuesday, August 12, the opening day of the fair.

Mega Ride tickets are \$60.00 and can be purchased from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM daily at the Owatonna Hy-Vee Customer Service counter.

NEW this year – Wristbands are free when redeeming Mega Ride Tickets. Lanyards are \$5.00.

How many Mega Ride tickets will be sold this year? Last year, **6285** thrill-seekers enjoyed unlimited rides throughout the fair.



Dan Stursa Day on the Wenger Fair Square Stage

Dan Stursa will celebrate 50 years of entertaining at the Steele County Free Fair this year! Stursa will be recognized on the Wenger Fair Square Stage in Fair Square Park on Thursday, August 14. Stursa is also a recent inductee into the Concertina Hall of Fame! Congratulations, Dan, and thank you for sharing your talents with the fair for 50 years!

Welcome to our Summer Intern

Emery Vick, daughter of Shannon and Lisa Vick and Alicia and Nathan Rolli, is joining the Steele County Free Fair team as our summer intern. Emery recently graduated with the Owatonna High School Class of 2025 and will be attending the University of Wisconsin – Madison in the fall to study political science. Following a trip to Peru with her Owatonna High School Spanish Class, Emery is in the fair office helping with everything that happens before and throughout the fair. Welcome to the SCFF Fair Family, Emery!

★ New Yummies for our Tummies!! ★

Snickers Salad Cheesecake

Vendor: Lakes Co. Eats

Description: Delicious cheesecake topped with Minnesota's famous Snickers salad! (*Snickers, green apples, caramel*)

Fresh Pressed Sugarcane Juice

★ **NEW VENDOR**

Vendor: Shoo-Ga Cane Juice Bar & Eatery

Description: Fresh pressed sugarcane juice with exotic fruit toppings such as lychee, passion fruit, dragon fruit and watermelon.

Cambodian Ribeye Steak Skewer

★ **NEW VENDOR**

Vendor: Shoo-Ga Cane Juice Bar & Eatery

Description: A glazed premium ribeye steak skewer grilled to perfection and steamed with jasmine rice and pickled veggie slaw.

Veggie Koshari ★ **NEW VENDOR**

Vendor: Kosharina Egyptian Cuisine

Description: Rice, pasta, chickpeas, lentils, tomato sauce & garlicky vinegar and "Dakkah" Spice, topped with crispy fried onions and mild hot sauce.

Chicken Bowl ★ **NEW VENDOR**

Vendor: Twisted Chicken

Description: Chicken Bowl with either Asian slaw or pico de gallo salad

BBQ Bourbon Bag

Vendor: Bourbon Chicken

Description: Large bag of Fritos filled with bourbon chicken, black beans, coleslaw, lettuce, cheese, tomato, sour cream and topped with BBQ bourbon sauce.

Pickle Cheese Bread

Vendor: Lakes Co. Eats

Description: Classic cheese bread topped with tangy pickle slices, parmesan cheese, and zesty dill ranch drizzle.

Bacon Blue Cheeseburger

Vendor: Come & Get It

Description: Grilled onion, crumbled blue cheese, homemade burger pickles, CGI sauce and bacon on a freshly made burger patty.

Dirty Float

Vendor: Just Take the Cake Too

Description: A twist on the trending dirty soda drink ~ next level delicious!

Dubai Beignet flight

Vendor: Just Take the Cake Too

Description: Delicious, filled Dubai inspired beignets.

Edible Bowl Taco Salad

Vendor: Lopez Concessions

Description: Taco salad in an edible flour tortilla bowl.

Kenyan Samosas

★ **NEW VENDOR**

Vendor: Samosa Sambusa

Description: A crispy, golden pastry packed with savory filling! Choice of spiced beef, tender chicken or fresh vegetables.

Original Cheese Curd Taco

Vendor: Richie's Cheese Curd Tacos

Description: Deep fried taco filled with cheese curds, lettuce and Richie's Sauce!

Strawberry Dubai Chocolate Churro

Vendor: Mama's Churro & Creamery

Description: Delicious Halo Churro drizzled with strawberry sauce, Dubai chocolate and pistachio.

The Donut Dog

Vendor: Minnesota's Original Brat Dog

Description: Frosting stuffed, sugar-sprinkled, donut fried to perfection on a stick!

Buffalo Chicken Tater Keg

★ **NEW VENDOR**

Vendor: Mama's Churro & Creamery

Description: 4 Tater Kegs (3x the size of a tater tot!) stuffed with buffalo chicken, melted mozzarella cheese and tangy buffalo sauce, served with blue cheese dipping sauce.



Steele County Free Fair
PO Box 650
Owatonna, MN 55060

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★ scff.org ★

★ Memorials and Donations ★

Donations Received:

Tim & Deb Arlt
Quinn Christenson
Nick Dahle
Aiden Ebner
Brock Hanson
David & Cindy Melby
Owatonna Eagles
Owatonna Garden Club
Tom & Stephanie Shea
Dustin Starks
John Swenson
Zappa Agency

Memorials Received:

In memory of Galen McDonald-Friend of the Fair
His family

In memory of Todd Deming-Friend of the Fair
Jerome Spindler

In memory of Joanne Havelka-Friend of the Fair
Jerome Spindler

In memory of Trudy Pierce-Friend of the Fair
Bruce & Rhonda Bennett

In memory of Judi Hughes Thiesse-Mother of
Sean Hughes
Sandy Jirele

In memory of Jim Hartle-Board Member Emeritus
Bruce & Rhonda Bennett
Bruce & BJ Busho
Dan & Vickie Deml
Corky & Julie Ebeling
Sandy Jirele

In memory of Harlan Manke-Friend of the Fair
Bruce & BJ Busho
Alice Reseland

In memory of Darlene Schmidt-Friend of the Fair
Jerome Spindler

★ SAVE THE DATE ★

The 2026 Steele County Free Fair will be August 18 – 23, 2026!