

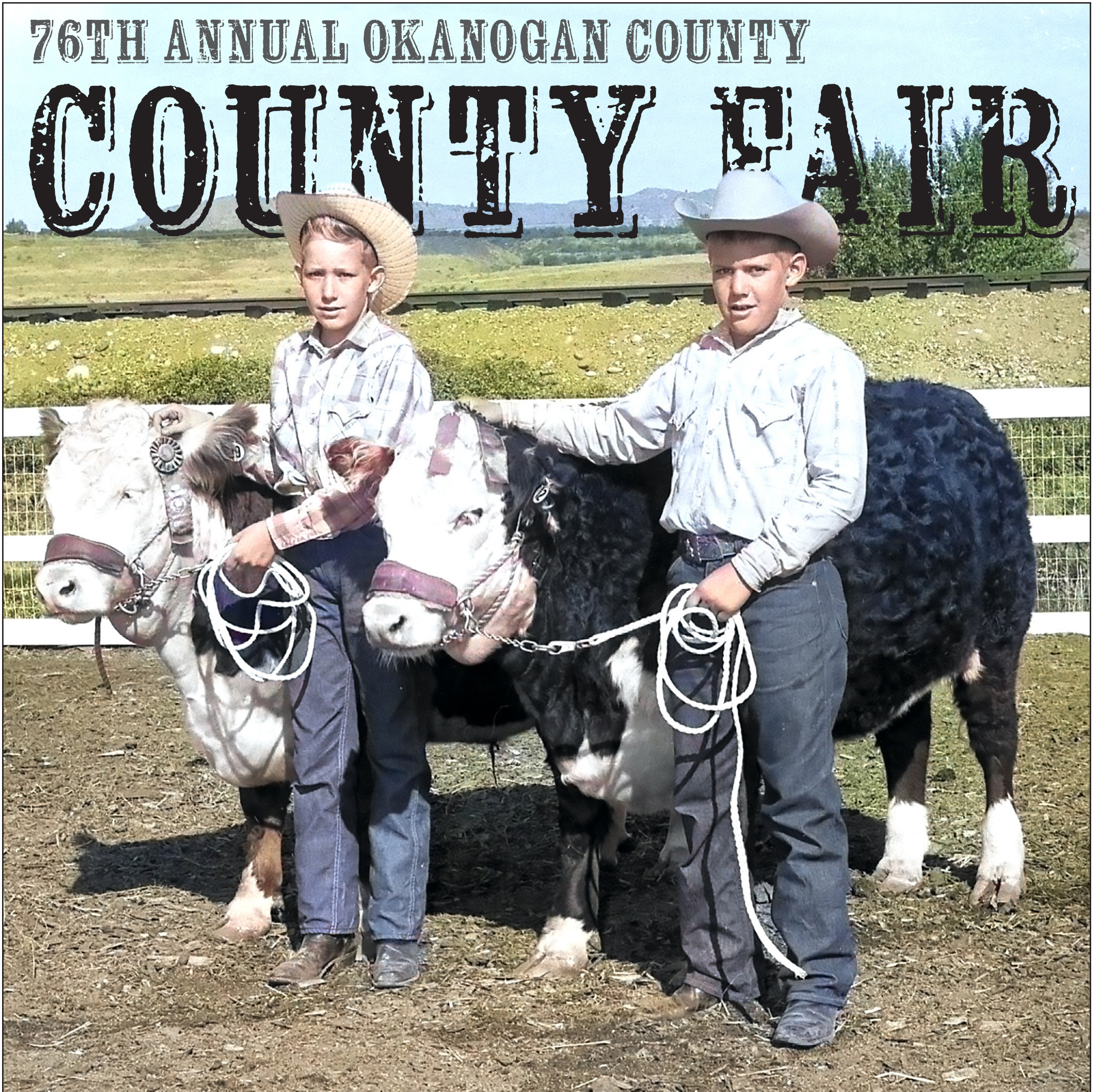
# SPECIAL EDITION

# THE OKANOGAN COUNTY CHRONICLE

September 6, 2023

Your guide to the 76th annual Okanogan County Fair

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**GUEST OPINION**

# Welcome to the fair

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR again when we dust off our boots and compete against our neighbors in all sorts of animal, craft, cooking and what-not contests at the Okanogan County Fair.

The Okanogan County Fair Advisory Committee would like to take this opportunity to invite everyone to join us at our 76th annual fair, Sept. 7-10.

Like many, we look forward to the fair all year long and can't wait for the weekend after Labor Day to roll around so we can see all of the exhibitors show and compete in their events, take in some rodeo action, stroll the vendors in the Agriplex, catch a show on the stage, indulge in the food court and visit with our friends and family who come to our fair.

This year we are proud to present country music star Easton Corbin live in concert. Corbin will perform in the rodeo arena at 8 p.m. Thursday night. The concert is free with fair admission.

Other weekend entertainers include hypnotist Gavin Hooper, magician Jeff Evans, Roy Todd Jackson and Friends, the Company Band, the Night Riders, Nicole Unser, Liberty Linklater and

more. There's also horse racing, pony relay races, two nights of rodeo action and much more.

A kids' zone will be new addition this year, featuring everything from a Power Wheels derby to mutton' bustin'.

A variety of new and returning food and craft vendors will be present throughout the weekend too, offering everything from hamburgers to handbags.

Come Saturday afternoon, consider supporting our local youth by purchasing an animal at the marketstock sale.

We extend our thanks to Queen Josie Fletcher, long-time supporters, participants, volunteers, barn and department superintendents, county commissioners, and everyone who helps make the fair happen. We feel it is very important to enrich the lives of our youth with these wonderful activities and help them make choices for the future.

As a reminder, we offer text message notifications about the fair. To sign up, text "Ok Fair" to 888-777.

We're certain this year's fair will be outstanding, so please consider helping us celebrate because we're "Proud of the Past, Poised for the Future."

BROCK HIRES is the chairman of the Okanogan County Fair Advisory Committee.



**BROCK HIRES**  
FAC Chairman

# OKANOGAN COUNTY FAIR • SEPT. 7-10

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Thursday, Sept. 7

9 a.m. Market beef, horse halter, swine market Classes  
 10 a.m. Goat judging and showing  
 FFA Produce Judging  
 Lamb Market Classes  
 11 a.m. Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 PUD safety demo  
 Noon Jeff Evans (Rotary Stage)  
 1 p.m. Karen & Gil (Rotary Stage)  
 PUD safety demo  
 1:30 p.m. Little Beef Barn halter  
 2 p.m. Jeff Evans (Rotary Stage)  
 3 p.m. Raveling Toad Show (Rotary Stage)  
 4 p.m. Liberty Linklater (Rotary Stage)  
 Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 5 p.m. Arthur Keast (Rotary Stage)  
 5:30 p.m. Lamb little people fitting & showing  
 6 p.m. Queen pageant  
 Lads & Lassies  
 Cat fashion show  
 6:30 p.m. Mutton Bustin' @ North End  
 7:15 p.m. Quilts of Valor presentation (Rodeo arena)  
 8 p.m. CONCERT: Easton Corbin (Rodeo arena)

7 p.m. Open Rodeo  
 The Company Band (Rotary Stage)

### Saturday, Sept. 9

9 a.m. Horse Games  
 FFA Livestock CDE  
 10 a.m. FFA Agronomy CDE  
 Small Animal Round Robin  
 Large Animal Round Robin  
 Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 Best dressed rabbit  
 Power Wheels derby (south of horse barn)  
 Horse Races (racetrack)  
 Little Beef Barn costume parade  
 Kid's cornhole tournament  
 Adult cornhole tournament to follow  
 Goat dress up  
 Poultry costume contest  
 Nashville Stars (Rotary Stage)  
 2 p.m. Market stock sale  
 3 p.m. Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 4 p.m. Gavin Hooper (Rotary Stage)  
 5 p.m. Nicole Unser (Rotary Stage)  
 6 p.m. Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 6:30 pm Open Rodeo  
 7 p.m. Liberty Linklater (Rotary Stage)  
 8 p.m. Roy Jackson's All-Star Band (Rotary Stage)

### Sunday, Sept. 10

8 a.m. Cowboy church (Rotary Stage)  
 9 a.m. Sagebrush Gypsies (Rotary Stage)  
 10 a.m. FFA apple bin races  
 Beef team fitting competition  
 Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 11 a.m. Horse Races (racetrack)  
 Fur & Feather auction  
 Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 12:30 p.m. What4 (Rotary Stage)  
 1 p.m. Queen coronation  
 2:30 p.m.

— All events are subject to change.

### Friday, Sept. 8

9 a.m. Beef fitting and showing  
 Poultry fitting and showing  
 Rabbit fitting and showing  
 Horse trail classes  
 Swine fitting and showing  
 11 a.m. Lamb fitting and showing  
 Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 Noon Arthur Keast (Rotary Stage)  
 1:30 p.m. Little Beef Barn fitting and showing  
 2 p.m. Liberty Linklater (Rotary Stage)  
 2:30 pm Sash making with queen (Location TBD)  
 3 p.m. Raveling Toad Show (Rotary Stage)  
 4 p.m. Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)  
 4:30 p.m. Lamb dynamic duos  
 5 p.m. Adult lamb fitting and showing  
 Night Riders (Rotary Stage)  
 6:30 p.m. Mutton Bustin' (south of horse barn)

# COME SEE US AT THE OKANOGAN COUNTY FAIR!

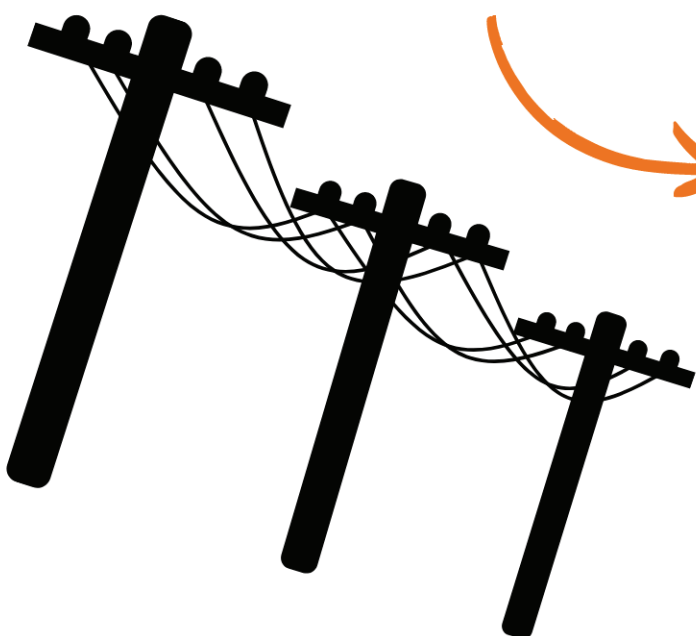
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# MAP OF FAIRGROUNDS

1 MAIN GATE PASSES AND PAY	6 SOUTH OUT RV	11 ARTS & CRAFTS	16 SERVICE GATE	22 HORSE BARN
2 AGRIPLEX	7 GOAT & DAIRY	12 BERG PAVILLION SWINE	17 4-H	23 GRAND STAND
3 STAGE	8 SHEEP	13 BEEF BARN	18 GRANGE	24 NORTH RV PARKING
4 RV PARKING	9 RABBITS & CATS	14 HISTORY HALL	19 HORTICULTURE	25 RACE HORSE AREA
5 SOUTH GATE PASSES AND PAY	10 FEATHER	15 JONES HALL	20 LITTLE BEEF	26 NORTH GATE PASSES AND PAY

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# Fair showcases best of Okanogan County

**T**HE BEST OF OKANOGAN County livestock, produce, crafts and homemaking items will be displayed this week during the 76th annual county fair. The fair opens at 9 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 7, at the fairgrounds, 175 Rodeo Trail. Admission will be charged, with daily and four-day passes available. Children 5 and younger will be admitted free.

The Agriplex and grounds between barns will be chock-full of commercial exhibits. A variety of food vendors will set up on the grassy midway area between the Agriplex and Arts and Crafts building. Special entertainers throughout the weekend includes country music recording artist Easton Corbin, Liberty Linklater, Nicole Unser, The Night Riders, hypnotist Gavin Hooper, magician Jeff Evans. The Company Band will perform Friday at 7 p.m. for dancing and Roy Jackson's All-Star Band will perform at 8 p.m. for Saturday's dance. A pair of local rodeo performances are set for 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday in the rodeo arena, and horse racing

is planned at 1 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. Sunday at the grandstands. Queen Josie Fletcher will reign over the fair. A pageant is planned at 6 p.m. Thursday on the Rotary Stage and coronation will be at 2 p.m. Sunday in the same location for the 2024 royalty. Thursday brings a full range of livestock classes for rabbits, swine, cattle and sheep. Youth horsemanship, tractor driving, entertainment on the midway stage, Corbin concert in the rodeo arena and Okanogan County Public Utility District demonstrations also

are planned. Friday highlights include poultry, beef, sheep and rabbit events. Saturday brings more livestock events, demonstrations and the 3 p.m. market stock sale in Berg Brothers Pavilion. Fair activities wrap up Sunday with an 8 a.m. worship service on the stage, various barn awards, horse playday in the rodeo arena, and fur and feather auction in the Berg Brothers Pavilion. The fair closes at 3 p.m. Exhibits can be picked up then.

Exhibitors will vie for premium points, with money awarded for different colored ribbons according to a points system outlined in the fair premium book. The deadline has passed for entering exhibits. Premium checks will be mailed.

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# Horse racing returns

## GUEST OPINION

# Enjoy the fair

**H**ORSE RACES ARE back at the Okanogan County Fair this year with multiple teams and exciting competition set for Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9-10.

Races are set to begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. Sunday. Further events before, during, and after the races will also put on for further entertainment.

Saturday will see team roping and barrel racing competition for Okanogan County residents under the age of 18 with runs inside the arena between relay races. Sunday's in-between-filler will be kid's games in the arena.

Other races, outside of the regular events, will be kid's activities, Walk-Trot-Run for adults and children, gate races, chiefs race, cow horse races, ladies quarter mile, and more.

Memorial races for Kathleen Maltis, Lona Fritz, and Fred Leskinen will also be included along with an accompanying Empty Saddles presentation.

The races are also fully sanctioned by the Horse Nations Indian Relay, an international organization headed by a council overseeing races across eight states, from Arizona to North Dakota, and Canada.

Teams compete in large and small scale races, from pow-wows



Horse races are back at the Okanogan County Fair this year with multiple teams and exciting competition set for Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9-10.

and local races to county fairs and the Championship of Champions in Wyoming later this month, Sept. 22-24. The winner of the championship race at the fair will receive free entry to the overall championship.

Competing for the local win, and possible international honor, are approximately 4-5 teams for the ladies and junior groupings and an estimated 7-9

senior relay teams, according to an organizer for the event, Carol Sivak.

Finalized numbers for entries and participating teams are not yet set as entries for Saturday and Sunday racing aren't accepted until Friday.

Sivak said that local businesses and organizations have once again made generous donations through money and

gifts, helping to make the event all the more special and worthwhile for competitors to attend.

The sponsors have helped in adding over \$30,000 to the pots, including \$1,100 added in both the 270 Open and half-mile Open.

Races are included in fair admission.

A new starting gate was purchased through a safety grant and the new barn is under construction at the fairgrounds. A finish date on the barn is unknown at this time.

# Open rodeos planned

**OKANOGAN** — The Okanogan County Fair will be home to a pair of open rodeos Sept. 8 and 9 in conjunction with the Okanogan County Fair.

Rodeos start at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday at the fairgrounds, 175 Rodeo Trail.

Al Parsons returns as announcer.

Fair admission covers entry to watch the rodeo.

Rodeo organizers did not respond to a Chronicle request for additional information.

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# Fletcher reflects on reign as fair queen

By SERAYLA BENT  
The Chronicle

AS THE OKANOGAN County Fair approaches, Queen Josie Fletcher, is preparing to pass down her crown. This year's queen candidates include, Lexi Duarte, 15, Sammy Sherrer, 17, and Izzabel Cruz, 15.

According to Fletcher, her reign has been "absolutely incredible," and she has "loved every minute of it."

"It has definitely been one of the best decisions of my life," Fletcher said.

During her time as queen, Fletcher was fortunate enough to participate in "so many things and events."

She has traveled to Ellensburg, Methow, Oroville, Tonasket, Omak and Okanogan.

While reminiscing, Fletcher added that attending events and interacting with the kids will be one of the things she will miss the most as queen, along with the rodeos.

The year-long reign has brought Fletcher to gain new experiences, one in particular regarding her "poise and grace" she now carries with her, as she used to be shy and not one to talk in front of big crowds, she said.

A big lesson Fletcher learned during her reign is to never allow doubt or give up.



Izzabel Cruz (from left), Lexi Duarte and Summer Sherrer (right) are seeking the 2024 fair queen crown. Also pictured is this year's Okanogan County Fair Queen Josie Fletcher.

SERAYLA BENT | The Chronicle

"I had a lot of people that doubted me, but it only made me more determined than ever to prove them wrong," she said. Although she is saddened that her time as Okanogan County Fair queen is coming

to an end, Fletcher is happy that that she was granted this

experience. Advice she would like to

give to young girls wanting to run for queen in the future is, "follow your dreams, even if you don't think you're the type of girl to be running for queen, absolutely run."

"It is one of the best experiences that you could do for yourself, you learn a ton and just never give up," she said.

According to the queen, it is also key to share your personality when running and to be true to who you are.

This year's queen candidates are excited to be participating in this year's fair.

Duarte said she's always wanted to run for fair queen.

"When I was little I would watch the older girls and always looked up to them and I want to be that for someone else," she said.

Throughout 17-year-old Sammy Sherrer's years in the fair, she has always looked up to the royalty and enjoyed the fair.

Sherrer was lucky enough to know some of the past queens which, "was a bonus," she said.

As a child, Sherrer enjoyed the fair and wants to be able to help build and bring more to the Okanogan County Fair.

Cruz said she was hesitant to run as fair queen, but after

seeing and meeting everyone, she saw how good of role models they were and decided to try it out in hopes to be a role model for somebody else too.

All queen candidates have had past experiences with the fair, such as showing goats, showing horses, horse-riding and more. A few queens also shared their biggest influence when it comes to the fair.

Duarte and Cruz reminisced on their grandpa's motivating them in regards to the fair.

For Sherrer, there was no specific influence other than her friends who she would hang out at the fair with growing up and a few previous fair queens.

While participating in this year's county fair, candidates hope to bring smiles to people faces, get rid of some stage nerves, be good role models and motivate other girls to run.

A queen pageant is planned at 6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7, on the Rotary Stage. The candidates will be asked a variety of questions and share prepared speeches.

The 2024 Okanogan County Fair queen will be crowned during a coronation ceremony at 2 p.m. Sunday on the Rotary Stage.

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# Corbin to headline concert

THE HEADLINER FOR this year's Okanogan County Fair, has been announced as county music singer Easton Corbin.

Known for hit tunes like "A Little More Country Than That" and "Roll With It," Corbin will take the stage at 8 p.m. at the Okanogan County Fairgrounds Thursday, Sept. 7.

Corbin's performance will be in the rodeo arena and is free with fair admission, according to fair organizers.

The chart-topping recording artist most recently



EASTON CORBIN

Country star Easton Corbin will perform Sept. 7

dropped his highly anticipated full length album "Let's

Do Country Right," out via Stone Country Records in

January. Produced by Wade Kirby and Derek George, the 14-track compilation featured Corbin's traditional country sound with steel guitar and down home lyrics reminiscent of classic jukebox tunes.

In February, Corbin made his return to country radio with his latest love anthem, "Marry That Girl."

Corbin's show is free with fair admission. Fair tickets can be purchased online at okanogan county.smashpass.com, or at the fair office, 175 Rodeo Trail, Okanogan.

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# Fair roots dates back more than 100 years

ALTHOUGH THE OKANOGAN County Fair will celebrate its 76th anniversary this year, its roots and traditions date back more than 100 years.

In 1905, the first known “county fair” was held in Riverside with an estimated attendance of 1,500. In 1913, the Grange organized a fair in Okanogan, which saw 2,500 spectators.

By 1916, Methow Valley resident Frank McLean was pushing for an annual county fair, advocating for larger county-wide displays, agricultural features, and benefits for industries in the county. However, it wasn’t until 35 years later that his vision for a centrally located annual fair became a reality.

A fair was held in Oroville in 1946 and saw continued growth. The following year, the fair moved to the Methow Valley. At the same time, the City of Okanogan held its first Okanogan County Junior Fair at the Okanogan Livestock Sale Yard. According to historical accounts, there were more than 80 livestock exhibits, with the top steer selling for 49 cents per pound.

In 1948, the City of Okanogan was planning to give the fair association an island on the south end of town, but the island flooded. The fair association, with help from the Boots and Saddles Club, purchased the property where the fair is presently located in 1950.

Grandstands and main exhibit buildings were constructed in 1951, and the name was officially changed to “Okanogan County Fair.”

The 1960s brought several new buildings and features to the fairgrounds.

The Grange kitchen was built in 1960 and was the largest permanent food facility on the grounds at that time. It was located where the annex is presently. In 1961 the Commercial Building was added. It was condemned following the 2021 fair.

In 1962, strong wind struck and demolished the outside of exhibit booths, and in 1963 the fair was almost canceled after a fire began 10 days before opening day. Eight barns were destroyed in the blaze.

“Okanogan and Omak firemen had barely won an intense struggle to keep the flames from devouring the entire fairgrounds when county fair officials decided on the spot the exposition would be held anyway,” said an article in *The Omak Chronicle* published Aug. 29, 1963. “Volunteers moved in promptly to help clear away the blackened debris. After looking into prospects of renting tents, fair officials by Tuesday had decided tents would not be needed.”

In 1965, four Quonset huts and hog, sheep and steer barns were built. The arts and crafts building followed in 1966.

By 1968, an administration building (now Jones Hall) was added, and a new horse barn was built on the north end of the grounds in 1981.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the fairgrounds saw the construction of the Agriplex and facelifts to several of the buildings.

In the late ‘80s, fairgrounds administration sought to increase usage of the grounds



THE CHRONICLE  
A firefighter examines the damage to a livestock building destroyed by fire in 1963. A total of six buildings were lost in the blaze

throughout the year. The fairgrounds flooded in 1989, and FEMA funds were used to start a major facelift for the entire grounds. Construction on the 120-foot-by-200-foot Agriplex began in 1989, with the goal of the facility eventually being used as a multi-use stadium.

The country music group Restless Heart performed a concert in the newly constructed building as a kickoff to the 1989 fair. The second phase of the project (concrete floor, heat and Annex) were completed in the mid-1990s.

In 1990, new metal siding

was added to the 4-H, Grange, and Horticulture buildings, and matching paint was added to the remaining 37 buildings on the fairgrounds. Renovated restrooms and show facilities were done the following year.

High winds blew the announcer booth off the top of the grandstands in 1992, so a new stand was built in a different location. The year 1992 also saw ground expansion, and the parking lot layout was revised.

In the following years, the grounds saw general maintenance and thrived as a county-based celebration.

Through the 2010s, a permanent stage was demolished for safety concerns and new bathrooms were added north of the poultry barn.

In 2015 the fair was delayed by two weeks because of the Okanogan Complex wildfire.

“The recommendation to move the fair date came after a nearly two-hour-long special Okanogan County Fair Advisory

Committee meeting Thursday night,” said a *Chronicle* article from Sept. 6, 2015. “County commissioners agreed late last month to allow a Type 1 (highest) incident management team to use the fairgrounds as a fire camp, for up to 4,500 fire personnel, for 14 days.”

In 2019, a new 150-foot-by-300-foot rodeo arena was installed along with new race rails. A new announcer stand

also was constructed.

In 2022, the grandstands were condemned and replaced with new aluminum seating, just in time for the 75th anniversary. The new grandstands were christened with a concert by country music legend Eddie Montgomery of Montgomery Gentry at the 2022 fair.

— *This story was written by Okanogan County Fair Advisory Committee Chairman Brock Hires.*



THE CHRONICLE  
New Quonset huts are constructed in 1965.

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A volunteer cuts lumber to build an animal stall ahead of the 1964 fair.

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# OKANOGAN COUNTY FAIR ROYALTY

**Okanogan County Fair royalty**  
 1960- Queen Anita Condon  
 1965- Queen Gail Hinger,  
 Princess Betty Orr  
 1966 - Queen Anna Reeves,  
 Princess Marcia Kelly  
 1967 - Queen Jimmie Sutton,  
 Princess Julie Campbell  
 1968 - Queen Vicky Halterman,  
 Princess Sandy McClure  
 1969 - Queen Denise Liebert,  
 Princess Toni Dammann  
 1970 - Queen Leanne Loose,  
 Princess Jeanne Agnew  
 1971- Queen Debbie Smith,  
 Princess Connie Shaw and  
 Freddie Jo Yockey  
 1973 - Queen Kelli McCaulley,  
 Princess Arlene Diebel  
 1974-75 - Queen Margie Hogan  
 1976 - Queen Nancy Fancher  
 1977 - Queen Cindy Bair  
 1979-80 - Queen Lisa Whitley  
 1981 - Queen Denise Laurie  
 1982 - Queen Cammy Byrd  
 1983 - Queen Susan Cooksey  
 1984 - Queen Teresa McLean  
 1985 - Queen Stephanie  
 Schertenleib  
 1986 - Queen Laurie Denney  
 1987 - Queen Nevada Jenkins  
 1988 - Queen Galena McLean  
 1989 - Queen Cheryl Kosewicz  
 1990 - Queen Beth Witters  
 1991 - Queen Katlenia Tyrrell  
 1992 - Queen Jennifer Drader;  
 Princesses Lori Theis,  
 Michelle Hopkins and Jodi Landt  
 1993 - Queen Molly Dogne,  
 Princess Molly Noel  
 1994 - Queen Lori Swanberg  
 1995 - Queen Kasey Allen  
 1996 - Queen Bonny Theis  
 1997 - Queen Polly Hayse  
 1998 - Queen Sarah Chambers  
 1999 - Queen Shannon Anderson  
 2000 - Queen Janice Tibbs  
 2001 - Queens Sonia Mason and  
 Amber Redman  
 2002 - Queen Vicki Hammer  
 2003 - Queen Madison Ecklor  
 2004 - Queen Libby Baker  
 2005 - Queen TeAnna Stevens  
 2006 - Queen Samantha Davis  
 2007 - Queen Nicole Allen  
 2008 - Queen Devan Pfitzer  
 2009 - Queen Michelle Demmitt  
 2010 - Queen Elizabeth Cleman  
 2011 - Queen Bekah Thomason  
 2012 - Queen Callie Barker  
 2013 - Queen Menze Pickering  
 2014 - Queen Miranda  
 Cleveland  
 2015 - Queen Alexee Howell  
 2016 - Queen Brisa Leep  
 2017 - Queen Cora Diehl  
 2018 - Queen Shelby White  
 2019 - Queen Katie Keane  
 2020-21 Queen Whitney Wilson  
 2022- Addey Christmann  
 2023 - Josie Fletcher



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