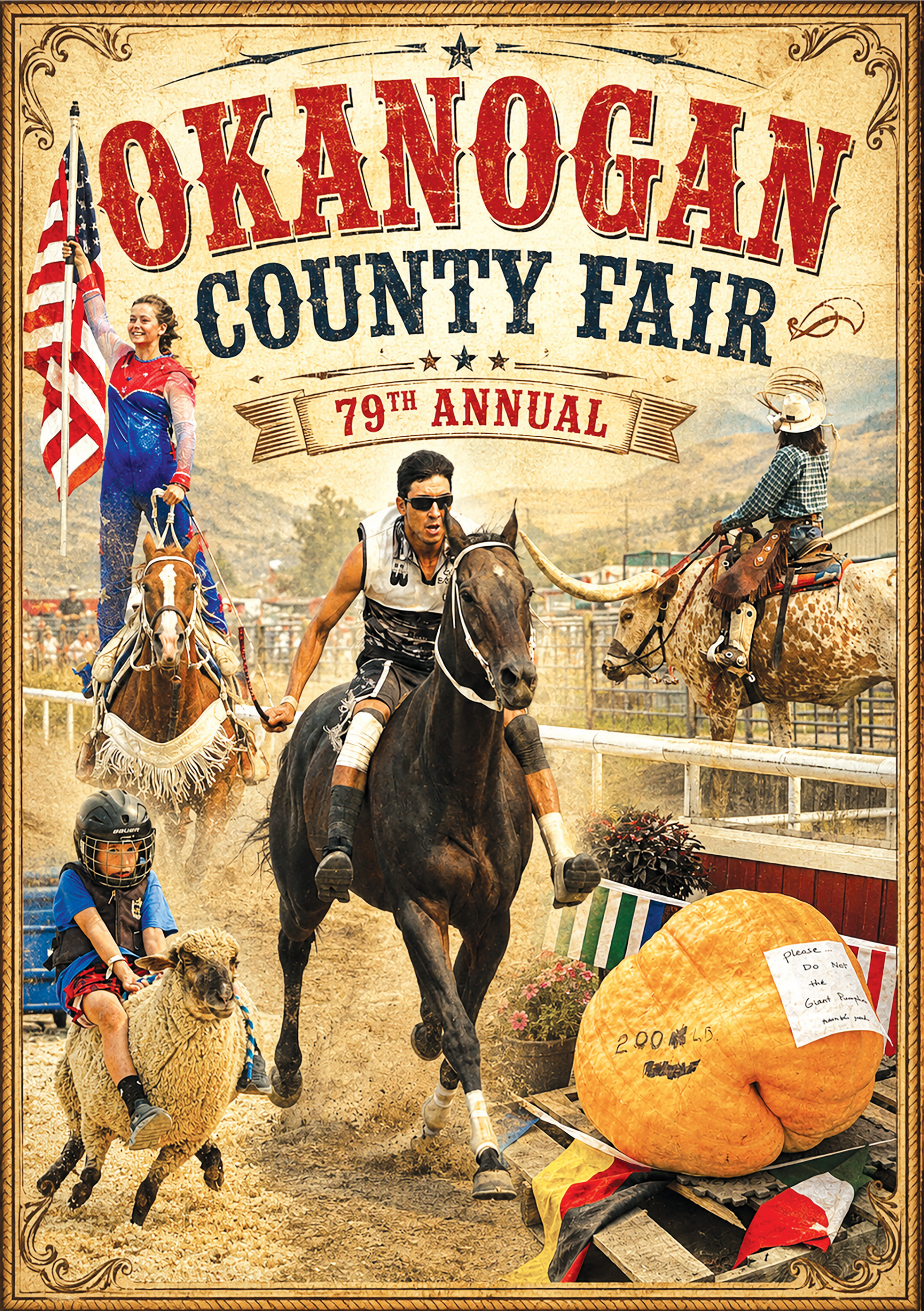


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CHRONICLE

September 9, 2026 Your guide to the 79th annual Okanogan County Fair \$3.00



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WELCOME
TO THE FAIR

Come one,
come all

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 79th annual fair, Sept. 10-13.

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.

Weekend entertainers include magician Jeff Evans, Roy Todd Jackson and Friends, Sagebrush Gypsies, Raveling Toad Show, the Company Band on Friday night, the Bustin Loose Band Saturday night, and more.

There's also horse racing and pony relay races, rodeo action at 6:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and much more.

Kids' Zone will feature Vuelta La Luna Circus, mutton' bustin' and kids games. A variety of new and returning food and craft vendors will be present throughout the weekend too, offering everything from hamburgers to handbags.

On Saturday afternoon, consider supporting our local youth by purchasing an animal at the Market Stock sale and on Sunday morning the Fur & Feather auction.

We extend our thanks to Queen Carly Pillow and Princess Autumn Wylie, longtime supporters, sponsors, 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 250 years of Independence and enjoy our "Farm Nights and Fairy Lights."

THIS PIECE was written by the Okanogan County Fair Advisory Committee.

Fair showcases best of county

Events run
Sept. 10-13 at
fairgrounds

THE BEST OF OKANOGAN County livestock, produce, crafts and homemaking items will be on display this week during the 79th annual Okanogan County Fair.

The fair opens at 9 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 10, at the fairgrounds, 175 Rodeo Trail. Admission will be charged daily, with a four-day season pass available. Children 7 and younger will be admitted free. The fair runs Sept. 10-13.

The Agriplex and grounds between the barns will be filled with commercial exhibits, while a variety of food vendors will set up along the grassy midway between the Agriplex and the Arts and Crafts Building.

A circus is among the new attractions this year.

"We will be having a circus at the fair this year," said Okanogan County Fair Advisory Committee Chairwoman Laura Sorenson. "They will do three 30-minute shows each day, as well as kid's games."

The kids' zone, south of the horse barn, will offer mutton busting and other youth activities. Special entertainment throughout the weekend includes magician Jeff Evans, Sagebrush Gypsies, Raveling Toad Show, Close Chorders, Roy Jackson Band, Road Dawgs, Night Riders, Hand Picked, Powder River Band and the Cash Duarte Band.

The Company Band will perform Friday and Bustin' Loose will take the stage Saturday. Both shows begin at 8:30 p.m.

Rodeo action returns at 6:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The open rodeos include team roping, barrels, saddle bronc, ranch bronc, junior bulls, calf roping and breakaway. Buckles will be awarded to event winners and saddles will be presented to local barrel racing and team roping winners.

Horse racing and pony relay races are planned Saturday and Sunday.

Queen Carly Pillow and Princess Autumn Wylie will reign over the fair. A pageant is planned Thursday evening on the Rotary Stage, with the coronation of the 2027 royalty scheduled for Sunday at the same location. Candidates are Malorie Grimes and Wylie.

Thursday brings a full range of livestock classes for rabbits, swine, cattle and sheep. Youth horsemanship, tractor driving,



Mutton bustin' is among popular activities set to return to this year's Okanogan County Fair, Sept. 10-13.

entertainment on the midway stage and Okanogan County Public Utility District demonstrations also are planned.

Friday highlights include poultry, beef, sheep and rabbit events.

Saturday brings additional livestock events and demonstrations, followed by the 3 p.m. market stock sale in the Berg Brothers Pavilion.

Fair activities wrap up

Sunday with various barn awards and the fur and feather auction in the Berg Brothers Pavilion.

Fairgoers will also see improvements around the grounds this year. The buildings have been painted barn red, while the Quonset huts have been painted white to help reduce heat inside.

New fencing runs along the front of the fairgrounds to the

south-end parking area, and a new service gate matches the fencing.

"It may be a bit dry in places at the fairgrounds due to having fire crews staging at the



JULIE BOCK PHOTO
A variety of animal and static exhibits are planned.



AL CAMP PHOTO
Rodeo action is planned at 6:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday in the arena.



TIM VINCENT PHOTO
The fair runs Sept. 10-13.

fairgrounds," Sorenson said. "There will also be a bit more dirt around the fairgrounds due to new water lines that were put in."

Sorenson credited fairgrounds manager Nick Bates with the improvements.

"Nick Bates, our fairgrounds manager, is doing a great job working to improve our fairgrounds and make everything better for the kids to have a great time at the fair," she said.

The fair closes at 3 p.m. Sunday, when exhibits can be picked up.

A full schedule of events is published on Page A3.

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CORRECTIONS

The Chronicle staff strives to be accurate. If errors occur we want to correct them promptly. If you believe a correction is warranted, please call 509-826-1110.

MAP OF FAIRGROUNDS

The map shows the layout of the fairgrounds. At the top left is the main gate (1) with passes and pay. To its right is the Agri-Plex (2) and handicap parking. Further right are the rodeo arenas, South (23) and North (24). The map includes various numbered locations for exhibits, parking, and services. A legend at the bottom explains the numbers and symbols.

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
			21 SHOP	27 KIDS ZONE

Legend: P PARKING, Restrooms, Shower

OKANOGAN COUNTY FAIR
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

All times and events are subject to change

Thursday, Sept. 10

9 a.m.	Swine market class Horse halter class Beef market class Okanogan County PUD youth pole climb	5 p.m.	Roy Jackson Band (stage) Adult lamb fitting and showing
10 a.m.	Market goat and pet goat class FFA produce judging PUD booth table safety demo Okanogan County PUD youth pole climb	6 p.m.	Outdoor PUD safety demo Mutton bustin' (kids zone)
11 a.m.	Lamb market class Jeff Evans Simple Magic (stage)	6:30 p.m.	Rodeo (rodeo arena)
Noon	Sagebrush Gypsies (stage)	7:15 p.m.	Quilts of Valor presentation (stage)
1 p.m.	Okanogan County PUD youth pole climb	8:30 p.m.	DANCE: The Company Band (stage)
1:30 p.m.	Little Beef Barn halter class Jeff Evans Simple Magic (stage)		
2 p.m.	Poultry confirmation Mutton bustin' (kids zone)		
2:30 p.m.	Raveling Toad Show (stage)		
4 p.m.	Mutton bustin' (kids zone)		
4:30 p.m.	Lamb fitting and showing demo		
5:30 pm	Lamb fitting and showing		
5:45 p.m.	Fair queen pageant (stage)		
6 p.m.	Lads and lassies Mutton bustin' (kids zone)		
8 p.m.	DANCE: Close Chorders (stage)		

Friday, Sept. 11

9 a.m.	Swine fitting and showing Rabbit fitting and showing Beef fitting and showing Horse trail classes		
10 a.m.	Dairy goat class and goat fitting and showing Sagebrush Gypsies (stage)		
11 a.m.	Poultry judging contest Lamb fitting and showing		
Noon	Night Riders (stage)		
1:30 p.m.	Little Beef Barn fitting and showing		
2 p.m.	Poultry fitting and showing		
2:30 p.m.	Sash making with fair royalty		
3 p.m.	Road Dawgs (stage)		
4 p.m.	Queen luncheon		
4:30 p.m.	Lamb dynamic duos		

Saturday, Sept. 12

9 a.m.	FFA livestock CDE Horse games		
10 a.m.	FFA agronomy CDE Small animal round robin		
11 a.m.	Large animal round robin Close Chorders (stage)		
Noon	Best dressed rabbit		
1 p.m.	Hand Picked (stage)		
1:30 p.m.	Little Beef Barn costume parade		
2 p.m.	Goat dress up contest Mutton bustin' (kids zone)		
2:30 p.m.	Poultry costume contest Raveling Toad Show (stage)		
3 p.m.	Horse races, Indian relay races (racetrack) Market stock sale (Berg Brothers Pavilion)		
4 p.m.	Mutton bustin' (kids zone) Powder River Band (stage)		
6 p.m.	Mutton bustin' (kids zone) Rodeo (rodeo arena) Roy Jackson Band (stage)		
7 p.m.	Rabbit agility		
8:30 p.m.	DANCE: Bustin' Loose (stage)		

Sunday, Sept. 13

10 a.m.	FFA apple bin races Beef team fitting competition Mutton bustin' (kids zone) Roy Jackson's All-Star Band		
11 a.m.	Fur and feather auction Horse races, Indian relay races (racetrack)		
12:30	Mutton bustin' (kids zone)		
1:15 p.m.	Royalty coronation (stage)		
1:30 p.m.	Cash Duarte Band (stage)		



AL CAMP PHOTO

Horse racing is planned Saturday and Sunday.

Rodeo, racing bring Western action to fair

WESTERN ACTION returns to the Okanogan County Fair this weekend with two nights of rodeo and two days of horse racing.

Rodeo action begins at 6:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The open rodeos will feature team roping, barrel racing, saddle bronc, ranch bronc, junior bulls, calf roping and breakaway roping. Buckles will be awarded to event winners, with saddles presented to local winners in barrel racing and team roping.

Friday night's rodeo will feature the Bill Richter Memorial Saddle Bronc Riding, honoring a longtime Okanogan Valley cowboy with a lifelong connection to the sport.

Richter, who died in 2023 at age 82, followed the rodeo trail as a young man and competed as a bronc rider. His father, Hans Richter, also ran a rodeo string when Richter was growing up.

Rodeo remained a major part of Richter's life. He worked as a ranch hand, millwright and log truck owner, served as a flank man for Hyndman & Schneider rodeos and later raised cattle.

Horse racing is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, with pony relay races also planned.



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Fair offers live music, family entertainment

New, returning acts set to take the stage

MUSIC WILL FILL THE Rotary Stage throughout the Okanogan County Fair, with a mix of local favorites, returning performers and evening dances.

The fair opens Thursday with a variety of entertainment, including the Sagebrush Gypsies, a trio offering a tranquil blend of Americana, folk and original songs. Karen Harris, Sandy Vaughn and Lota Duarte are each performer in their own right, coming together to create three-part harmonies.

The Raveling Toad Show also returns to the fair, bringing its blend of country, rock and blues to the stage twice during the weekend.

Thursday evening brings Close Chorders, led by Jay Patterson. The group will close out the day's entertainment with a mix of classic rock, blues and popular favorites.

Friday brings another full slate of music, beginning with the Sagebrush Gypsies before Roy Todd Jackson takes the stage.

Jackson, formerly of Oroville, will bring an '80s music set Friday, followed by country music Saturday. He will return Sunday with local guest performers.

The Road Dawgs take the stage Friday. The popular group, which performed at last weekend's Ferry County Fair, blends country, rock and blues.

Night Riders will follow with a sound that has kept audiences dancing for more than 40 years. The longtime group mixes kickin' country with classic rock.



The Company Band will provide music for dancing Friday night at 8:30 p.m.



Bustin' Loose will provide country music Saturday night.



Jeff Evans brings his magic show to the fair Thursday at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.



The Sagebrush Gypsies perform Thursday and Friday.



Close Chorders performs Thursday and Saturday.

Stage entertainment schedule			
Thursday, Sept. 10			
11 a.m.	Jeff Evans Simple Magic	8:30 p.m.	The Company Band
Noon	Sagebrush Gypsies	Saturday, Sept. 12	
1:30 p.m.	Jeff Evans Simple Magic	11 a.m.	Close Chorders
2:30 p.m.	Raveling Toad Show	1 p.m.	Hand Picked
5:45 p.m.	Fair queen pageant	2:30 p.m.	Raveling Toad Show
8 p.m.	Close Chorders	4 p.m.	Powder River Band
Friday, Sept. 11			
10 a.m.	Sagebrush Gypsies	6 p.m.	Roy Jackson Band
Noon	Night Riders	8:30 p.m.	Bustin' Loose
3 p.m.	Road Dawgs	Sunday, Sept. 13	
5 p.m.	Roy Jackson Band	10 a.m.	Roy Jackson's All-Star Band
7:15 p.m.	Quilts of Valor presentation	1:15 p.m.	Royalty coronation
		1:30 p.m.	Cash Duarte Band

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Two vie for fair queen title

TWO GIRLS ARE VYING for the title of 2027 Okanogan County Fair queen. Malorie Grimes, a junior at Omak High School, is seeking the crown after four years in FFA and five years showing sheep at the Okanogan County Fair.

“I want to be more involved in the community,” Grimes said of her decision to run for fair queen.

Joining Grimes in the race is Autumn Wylie, the 2026 Okanogan County Fair princess, who is seeking to move up to the queen’s title.

Wylie is entering her sophomore year at Tonasket High School and lives on a small ranch in Tunk Valley, where she enjoys working cattle and riding horses.

Wylie said her year as princess has been a dream come true and that she is proud to have represented Okanogan County.

“I hope you have the best fair ever and I hope to see you all there,” she said.

The candidates will be evaluated throughout the fair weekend on their portfolios, interviews and stage presence. Secret judges also will observe how the candidates interact with fairgoers and participate in fair activities.

The pageant is scheduled for 5:45 p.m. Thursday evening on the Rotary Stage. The new royalty will be crowned Sunday at 1:15 p.m.



OKANOGAN COUNTY FAIR QUEEN | Facebook
Two girls are vying for the title of 2027 Okanogan County Fair queen. Candidates are Malorie Grimes and princess Autumn Wylie.

Fairgrounds grow with the years

By BROCK HIRES
The Chronicle

ALTHOUGH THE OKANOGAN COUNTY FAIR will celebrate its 79th 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 countywide 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.



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

In 1948, the City of Okanogan was planning to give the fair association an island on See **HISTORY**, page A6

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HISTORY

from page A5

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 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



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

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.

The fair went on to host concerts by Easton Corbin

in 2023 and the Frontmen (Tim Rushlow of Little Texas, Richie McDonald of Lonestar, and Larry Stewart of Restless Heart) in 2024.

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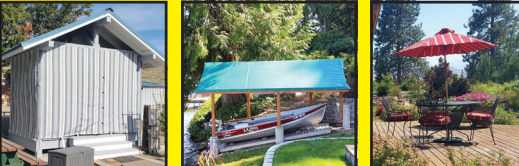
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Local Kids. Strong Traditions. Bright Futures.



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Memory lane: A look back at past fairs

The Chronicle’s photo files are chock-full of fair photos from year’s past. We pulled a few to share with current readers.



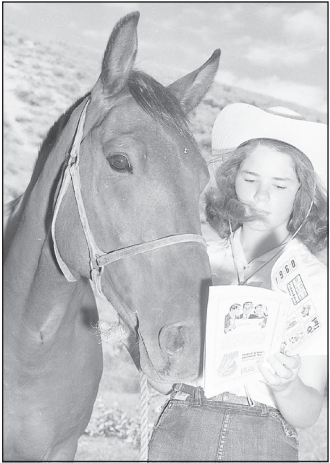
A vendor offers Electrolux vacuums in 1953



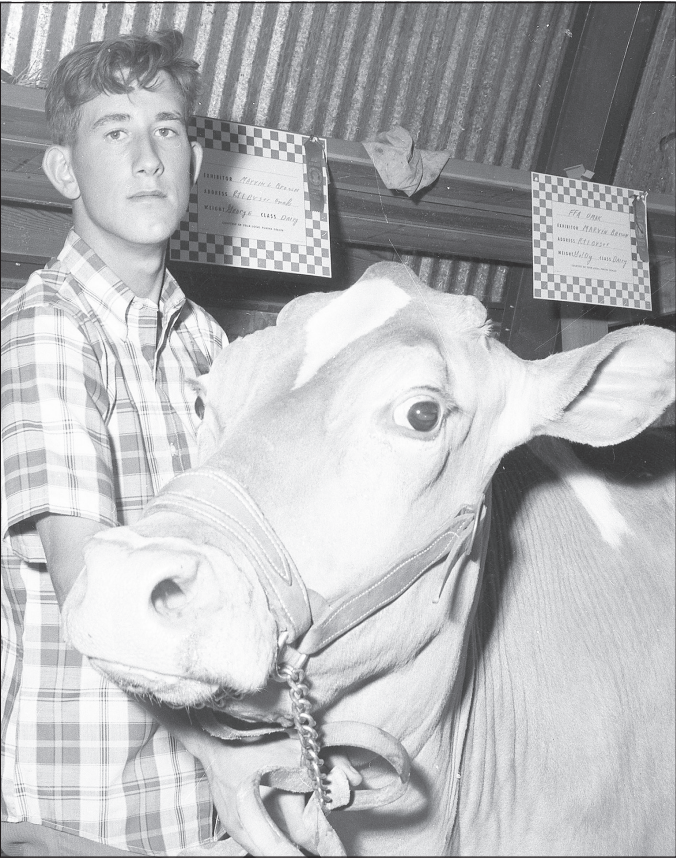
Youngsters show their herfords in 1966.



An exhibitor waits at the premium pay window in 1975.



Reading the fair program in 1960.



An exhibitor shows his steer in 1967.



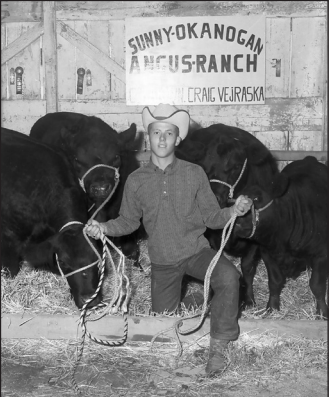
Entrants head down the stretch in 1966 chuckwagon races.



The Arts and Crafts Building was a hive of activity in 1976



A boy shows his prize-winning bird in 1962.



Craig Vejraska at 1964 fair.



Youngsters check out an exhibit in 1954.



Canning judges get into their work in 1954.



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We would like to invite all the businesses who participated with us in the 2025 livestock market back again this year.

See you at the Fair!!



- Air Conditioned Boarding
- In-house Diagnostic Lab
- Monday - Friday 8 - 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.



VETERINARIAN
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Celebrating 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 Pfizter
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
2024 - Lexis Duarte
2025 - Kara McMillan
2026 - Queen Carly Pillow; Princess Autumn Wylie.



1966
Anna Reeves



1974-75
Margie Hogan



1981
Denise Laurie



1982
Cammy Bird



1983
Susan Cooksey



1984
Teresa McLean



1985
Stephanie Schertenleib



1986
Laurie Denney



1987
Nevada Jenkins



1988
Galena McLean



1989
Cheryl Kosewicz



1990
Beth Witters



1991
Katlenia Tyrrell



1992
Jennifer Drader



1993
Molly Dolgner



1994
Lori Swanberg



1995
Kasey Allen



1996
Bonny Theis



1997
Polly Hayse



1998
Sarah Chambers



1999
Shanon Anderson



2000
Janice Tibbs



2001
Sonia Mason



2001
Amber Redman



2002
Vicki Hammer



2004
Libby Baker



2006
Samantha Davis



2007
Nicole Allen



2008
Devan Pfizter



2009
Michelle Demmitt



2010
Elizabeth Cleman



2011
Bekah Thomason



2012
Callie Barker



2013
Menze Pickering



2014
Miranda Cleveland



2015
Alexee Howell



2016
Brisa Leep



2017
Cora Diehl



2018
Shelby White



2019
Katie Keane



2020-21
Whitney Wilson



2022
Addey Christmann



2023
Josie Fletcher



2024
Lexis Duarte



2025
Kara McMillan



2026 Queen
Carly Pillow



2026 Princess
Autumn Wylie

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and Fairy Lights'*
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Sept. 10-13
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KIDS HORSE EVENTS & RACES

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MUTTON BUSTIN'

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GIRL SCOUTS • FFA

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