

On your mark, get set ... GO!

Waukesha County Fair
kicks off with camaraderie,
memories and more



Eight-week-old farm pigs, all with NASCAR-themed names, take off in the first animal race, brought to the fair by Pleasure Valley, a farm near West Bend. The pig in green won the race.



Photos by Hunter Turpin/Special to The Freeman

A young girl cheers in hopes of being selected as a cheerleader for one of the animals by Larry Laux of Pleasure Valley.

By Hunter Turpin
Special to The Freeman

WAUKESHA — The Waukesha County Fair opened Wednesday, celebrating 180 years, featuring local and state-based music, food, shopping and entertainment to showcase county pride through and through.

The fair will take place through Sunday with both daily and special events on select days only, offered at indoor and outdoor venues.

"(This is about) Fellowship, camaraderie, memories, building those moments that you can't forget and last for generations," said Waukesha County Fair Association Executive Director Chrissy Gluege. "For some people, this is maybe their first job to maybe their first time on a ride or maybe first time experiencing sheep and goats."

Fairgoers ranged in age from children to senior citizens, including a 5-week old named Wyatt.

"I recently moved back to the area from Green Bay and we had been here when all my kids were growing up and we decided to bring Wyatt this year," said Carrie Cera, Wyatt's grandma.

Cera said she doesn't know if they will be coming back later this week as weather forecasts show temperatures approach-



A rare breed of chicken with especially short legs on display at the poultry tent ahead of Friday's Junior Livestock Auction.

ing 90 degrees. Adjusting to the heat, the fair association lifted the ban on carry-in water bottles; there is also a misting tent to help visitors cool off.

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What: Waukesha County Fair
Where: Waukesha County Expo Grounds, 1000 Grandview Blvd., Waukesha.
Hours: 10 a.m. – 11 p.m. today; 10 a.m. to midnight Friday; 10 a.m. to midnight Saturday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday.
Tickets: Adult, \$12; Youth (6-12 years), \$6; Children 5 and under free. Daily parking \$5.

- The Waukesha County Fair Miller Lite Main Stage's musical acts begin tonight with country-music singer Randy Houser at 8 p.m.
- Friday's Main Stage show is Ted Nugent at 8 p.m.
- Seether takes the main stage at 8 p.m. Saturday.

General fair admission grants access to the concert. VIP tickets and Elite VIP tickets are available for some of the shows.

Info: WaukeshaCountyFair.com

Fair

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The planners of the fair had to pivot to meet changes in supplies and staffing coming off the pandemic and changes in the economy, according to Gluege. She said some vendors and food options might be different this year, but she thinks they put together a great fair.

"I think it was just being mindful of what's to come and expecting the unexpected and we all know that's hard to do, but as fair people we adapt," Gluege said.

Events on Wednesday included farm animal races, a BMX stunt show, livestock auctions, truck and tractor pulls and concerts, as well as the Fairest of the Fair Royal Tea event, which Fair Association Treasurer Charity Guzman said she's most excited for.

"We have something for everyone and all ages. I know that sounds pretty cliche for a fair, but being able to pull it off is pretty impressive," said Gluege. "Seeing the smiles, the faces and just having people together... that's what this is all about."

Planning for next year's fair will begin as soon as this year's ends, Gluege said. The fair is put together by a non-profit, volunteer-based organization.

"Sunday the fair ends, we clean up on Monday, and then Tuesday the fair planning for next year kicks off," Gluege said.

Junior Livestock Auction

Tents featuring lambs, poultry, cattle, rabbits, goats and pigs were located near the back end of the fairgrounds. Visitors could walk through the tents to view the animals, some of which were being groomed by their owners ahead of shows and auctions.

The fair and Junior Livestock Auction is the culmination of a year-long project for 4-H, a youth development organization, and Future Farmers of America.

Amara Bugenhagen, 19, is



Hunter Turpin/Special to The Freeman

Members of the Waukesha County Fair Association and 2022 Fairest of the Fair Emma Vorpagel of Hartland cut a ribbon at the end of the opening ceremony.



Religious groups and political groups were scattered throughout the fairgrounds, hoping to spread their messages.



Cooks at George's Fun Foods tent prepare a variety of meats, like turkey legs and pork chops.

the junior leader for the poultry tent. She has been raising chickens for 12 years and attends fairs and events across the state.

"I teach a lot of the younger kids how to do showmanship, different ins and outs of chickens like how the egg cycle works, life cycle, how to bathe your bird, different feed reactions," Bugenhagen said.

She is especially proud of two cockerels, or male chickens under one year old, that she hatched in February, calling them her pride and joy.

"Some of this line come from some chickens I bought from a guy in Indiana who's actually one of the top breeders of them in the world," Bugenhagen explained. "Especially this

breed; it's super rare and they have something called the lethal gene so he has really short legs, they only have around quarter-inch legs. They also are the only breed that has a 90 degree tail angle. This breed actual-

ly came from Japan and they were like in with the emperors who were the only ones who had them."

On Friday morning, there will be a poultry show, followed by an auction Friday night.

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