

Freelance Star 2010 Article on the Rebirth of the Fair

Stafford County Fair returns
after a 51-year lapse

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When you want to have the first county fair in 50 years and its weekend debut must go off without a hitch, there's one family that gets called: the Sheltons.



The Stafford County Fair is back, thanks to Gordon Shelton, Mountain View High School and a host of businesses and volunteers.

The Sheltons have been involved with local fairs for more than four generations.

Gordon Shelton, a lifelong Stafford resident, came up with the idea of having a fair as a fundraiser for the high school. He researched the Free Lance-Star archives and believes the last Stafford County Fair was in 1959.

The school's PTSO quickly made Shelton the fair manager.

And he organized the event in less than two months.

The fair ran last weekend and ended at 7 p.m. yesterday with music by the bluegrass and gospel group One Lane Bridge.

"The vendors and sponsors, everyone did something," he said on the fair's final day. "It's going great. We couldn't do it without the support of the local community."

Burton's Automotive, Fredericksburg Motorsports and Hartwood Grocery were some of the sponsors that donated something to make the fair happen.

The fair had rides, including a Ferris wheel and bumper cars, more than a dozen games, corn dogs, cotton candy and volunteer fire and rescue demonstrations.

Shelton said he wants to have the fair annually, and he asked people to continue visiting the fair's website for announcements.

Admission, parking and the live music all were free. Shelton said he wanted all families to be able to enjoy the fair.

Ride tickets were \$20 at the gate or \$10 if bought from any of the sponsors.

"For the first time, I didn't think it was that bad," said Nicole Decker, who was cooking hot dogs and hamburgers with students for the school's PTSO.

staffordfair.com

Photo: Kyle Hartzell (left), 14, and Jacob Jabro, 9, ride the Paratrooper at the Stafford County Fair at Mountain View High School yesterday. MIKE MORONES/THE FREE LANCE-STAR