

County fair launches program to attract Hispanic attendance

A lowrider car show, a Mexican Village and animal displays in the mall are some of the ideas being tossed about by a committee of the Santa Cruz County Fair, which hopes to increase fair attendance, especially by Hispanics.

To do that, the Hispanic Entry Outreach Program committee, which met for the first time yesterday, is trying to use the program to increase Hispanics' participation in fair activities.

"We really don't do any outreach — this is our first attempt to do that," said fair manager John Kegebein, adding, "I'd like to see our entries double in three years."

Of the 7,939 entries judged last year, probably less than 5 percent were from Hispanic participants, Kegebein said. Competitors, who last year vied for \$50,000 in premiums, pay up to 50 cents to enter exhibits.

"You need people to actually go out and recruit," said Celia Organista, a civic leader and committee member.

Fair officials are embarking on the outreach program, to be launched now and reinitiated next year, with \$3,500 in grant money

obtained by former fair manager Ron Haedicke.

Committee members agreed on hiring a Spanish speaker to can-

Kegebein named permanent manager

John Kegebein, who has been serving as interim manager of the Santa Cruz County Fair, has been selected as manager by the fair's board of directors.

The decision was made at last week's board meeting.

Kegebein worked at the fairgrounds for 22 years as a senior maintenance worker and supervisor. After his retirement five years ago, he served on the fair board of directors and was serving as board president when he was appointed interim fair director last month.

Kegebein also helped found the Agricultural History Project, and has won numerous awards for community service, including being named as the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce's Man of the Year for 1990.

vass Hispanic areas and on allocating remaining funds for advertising.

The six-member committee shelved the idea of translating the premium book into Spanish, but launched a plan to draw up a poster in Spanish. The poster will supplement the 50th anniversary fair poster to be mass distributed.

Recruiters will circulate information about the children's free-admission day and the two education days when students are admitted free.

Other outreach programs, such as setting up a petting zoo at the Capitola Mall, can be coordinated through the Junior Fair Board, because, Kegebein said, "Part of their responsibility is to promote the fair."

For this year's fair, which will run from Sept. 10 through 15, preliminary plans call for car displays to appeal to all groups, including low-rider enthusiasts.

The pitch for having a Mexican Village become a fair fixture expanded to discussion of setting up an international village on the grounds.

—Laramie Trevino