



No bum steer for Gina Bella as the County Fair opens.

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

# It's opening day at County Fair

WATSONVILLE — Fair Manager Gil Mello and Fair Board President John Tuck strolled through the main gate at noon today to officially open the 41st Annual Santa Cruz County Fair.

Gates will remain open until 11 o'clock tonight for the six-day tradition, which ends Sunday.

Opening day is also Senior Citizens Day. All persons 65 years of age and older will be admitted for 25 cents. The sizzling chicken barbecue on the amphitheater lawn will continue until 7 tonight. Free entertainment will be provided by Chris Michielssen (4 p.m.); The Brass Band (5 p.m.); and the Coconut Grove Orchestra (6 p.m.).

Approximately 2,700 paying fair-goers are expected

today, according to Mello, who is hopeful of breaking last year's record paid attendance of 65,000. He said the "always-entertaining" spectra of fair activities serves as an attraction for people.

The primary drawing card, however, remains the top line entertainment provided each evening — free to all fair-goers.

Wednesday night, for example, will be Quarterflash (with hits "Harden My Heart" and "Find Another Fool"). They will be preceded by the Inflatable Dates. Emmylou Harris and The Hot Band will play Thursday at 9 p.m., preceded by Skip Towne and The City Limits.

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## Fair

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The fair will be open from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Wednesday. It will also be Pepsi Family Day. Adults bringing two empty Pepsi cans will get \$1 off the regular \$3.50 admission price or 50 cents off the regular \$1.25 children's price.

Other feature events Wednesday will be steer roping at 7 p.m. in the Horse Show Arena. A watermelon-eating contest, tug-of-war and costume tricycle race will be held at 11 a.m., noon and 7:30 p.m., respectively, all sponsored by the Junior Fair Board. Livestock judging will also get under way Wednesday morning and afternoon.

The Diaper Derby will get off to a crawling start on the playhouse stage at 1 p.m. Wednesday. At 6:30 p.m. on the amphitheater lawn will be demonstrations by California rescue dogs, followed at 7 p.m. by dog training. The Watsonville Band will play throughout the grounds beginning at 7 p.m.

The fairgrounds are located directly off Hecker Pass Road (Highway 152) in Watsonville. It is accessible from Santa Cruz on Highway 1 from Freedom Boulevard, Airport Boulevard, Green Valley Road (Main Street) or Riverside Avenue.

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