

Preparations for fair moving along



ABOVE: Curbs around the fairgrounds are getting a fresh coat of paint Monday as preparations move into high gear for the approaching Santa Cruz County Fair, which runs Sept. 9-14. BELOW: Judy Souza (right), Marie Skov and other volunteers sort through arrivals in the arts-and-crafts division inside the Crosetti building Monday.

Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

113th Santa Cruz County Fair offers new and traditional

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Early signs indicate success for this year's Santa Cruz County Fair, with fair entries up and ticket presales running ahead of last year.

According to Steve Stagnaro, marketing director of the Santa Cruz County Fair, the 2008 fair has seen a huge increase in entries across its 17 departments that include nearly 150 classes.

"That is a good indicator of the level of interest in the fair," Stagnaro said.

Dates for the fair are Sept. 9-14. Stagnaro expects attendance for the six-day fair to top 70,000.

"(For) almost any conceivable thing that is a passion of yours, there is an entry for you," Stagnaro said.

The passions on display at the fair will include traditional fair entries like





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Hand-spun and hand-woven items have been tagged and await judging.

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jams and jellies, ducks and chickens, cattle and sheep as well as the not-so-traditional entries such as poetry, ugly cakes, rolling pins and home-brewed beer.

Volunteers have spent the last week sorting and filing thousands of entries in the food-preservation and arts-and-crafts categories inside the Crosetti Building.

Marie Skov, who has worked as a volunteer for the past 45 years, said judging will take place Wednesday.

"We get going about 9 a.m., and it usually takes about five hours," she said. Food preservation includes canned goods such as apricots, pears, dill pickles, string beans, canned eggs and all jams and jellies.

On Monday, about six volunteers picked through table upon table of entries, including woodcarvings, painted household items and various crafts.

"There's a tremendous amount of care and attention to detail in the work people bring in," Skov said. "We've got a lot of work ahead of us."

Fairgoers can look forward to several new events to the fair, Stagnaro said. A destruction derby has been added to the lineup on Sunday, Sept. 14 at 5 p.m. In this last-car-standing contest, junker cars will ram

and collide into each other until only one is left running.

Animal mothers expecting newborns will have a special place at the fair in the new birthing center in the animal barn. While animal births have occurred at the fair in past years, the birthing center offers a new twist on a happenstance occurrence. Bleachers will be set up around the center so fairgoers can witness the birth of piglets and maybe even a calf.

Also new on Sunday will be a show by Asociacion de Charros, Los Amigos, a group of more than 50 riders and horses in beautiful costumes demonstrating stylized riding and horsemanship from Mexico. The show will take place at 5:30 p.m. in the horse arena. El Chicano will perform after the charros.

"We think it will be a wonderful family afternoon," Stagnaro said of Sunday at the fair.

Returning to the fair lineup are favorites like the carnival rides, fair food, racing pigs, those talented Frisbee dogs with their amazing tricks, hypnotist Michael Mezner, and, of course, the kids and their animals.

The Santa Cruz County Fair reflects the agricultural heritage and economy of the area, Stagnaro said, epitomizing what a county fair should be. "It looks more like what a county fair was," he said.

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For tickets and the fair schedule, go online to www.santacruzcountyfair.com



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Home-canned goods cover several tables at the fairgrounds.