

Attendance Record For The County Fair

Helped by heart throb recording star and actor Rick Springfield, this year's 63,160-paid attendance set an all-time record for the Santa Cruz County Fair that concluded Sunday in Watsonville.

For the second time in two years, a new record was established. This year's 40th annual rendition total topped last year's attendance by 1,643.

Fair Manager Gil Mello pointed to Springfield's concert on Wednesday as helping to push attendance over the top. The 10,918 fairgoers that day set a Wednesday record at what Mello admitted was "the biggest concert we've ever had at the fair."

However, Mello noted, "Rick Springfield by himself isn't going to do it. This was truly just a tremendous effort by a lot of people."

Many of those fair organizers, in fact, had to have some doubts just before opening day when it was learned the traditional agricultural displays, including the thousands of the Pajaro Valley's best apples, wouldn't be allowed due to the Mediterranean fruit fly infestation.

The first-ever Scarefly competition designed to scare away the Medfly drew 44 entries and a lot of laughs in the Harvest Festival Building.

Also new — and just as successful — was the carnival games area run by local service clubs and non-profit organizations. The dozen game concessions operated as a experiment for fairs statewide and has left operators smiling.

This year's fair also drew the largest number of entries in the various departments. The \$43,000 in fair premiums (prize money) was another record.

SEE BACK PAGE

COUNTY FAIR

FROM PAGE 1

With all the talk of the entertainment line-up, exhibits, booths, carnival and concessions, Mello maintained the "heart of the fair" continues to be its "educational aspect."

He added, "The Horse Show, the 4-H, departments like livestock, floriculture, home arts, education, agriculture, photography, wine and beer. That is the heart of it all. That is where we put our emphasis.

"We could move in with all this new wave entertainment," he added, "but we would still have a real country, county fair."

Today's activity on the fairgrounds continued almost as busy as ever. Everything from works of art to flowers were being taken away.

"You almost want to cry," noted Mello, who was already thinking toward next year.