

Fairgrounds passes audit, announces upgrades

Written by Mitch Meador - Lawton Constitution
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The Comanche County Fairgrounds Trust Authority accepted its fiscal year 2010 audit as presented by Kimberly Furrh of Furrh & Associates at the regular monthly meeting on Monday.

It was a good report with no exceptions.

Derek Gossett of the fairgrounds maintenance crew gave the board a rundown on upcoming projects, including replacement of 3,000 square feet of interlocking mat for the wash rack in the Expo Building and giant ceiling fans with 24-foot blades that would move 360,000 cubic feet of air per second in the same building and possibly draw more events to the fairgrounds in the summertime. He recommended finding a new site to store the dirt for the rodeo arena, as the current site is on a slope.

Oktoberfest doubles in size

Caterer Ellen Fisher said the Oktoberfest more than doubled in size this year, as attendance went from 6,000 to 13,000. The event accounted for 72 percent of the fairgrounds catering revenue for October, and catering the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge buffalo sale accounted for 11 percent. She is looking to move the food vendors to the side at next year's Oktoberfest, as there was high demand for "to-go" orders.

The 580 Roller Girls accounted for 80 percent of concession sales for the month, and the Lawton Dog Fanciers show brought in 19 percent.

Executive Director Phil Humble gave an update on the vision plan for the fairgrounds. He said

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the architect has drawn up plans to redo the Prairie Building and is now preparing a bid package.

“We should be able to start by March,” he said.

There is room for 35 more RV power pedestals, but the fairgrounds has only enough money for 25 at this point, Humble noted. Executive Assistant Brandy Black is currently securing basketball sponsorships for the county tournament. The widening of the doors in the restrooms will take place during the December lull. Gossett will have the grounds set up for the Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce’s Wichita Mountains Classic Steer & Heifer Show by Thursday evening.

Office Manager Joe Kirk gave an update on a project to keep the fairgrounds’ income and outgo on Quickbooks so that it runs neckand-neck with those of Scott Hatch of Hatch, Croke & Associates, who prepares the monthly financial reports. That will help the staff do a better job of keeping up with the latest expenditures, Humble noted.