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(Neb.)-Nebraska State Fair Numbers Down A Little, Sets Single Day Record



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 09/04/2013 11:27 AM

(GRAND ISLAND)-The Nebraska State Fair is now over for another year. This year, although numbers were down slightly compared with last year, the fair set a new single day attendance record since moving to Grand Island with a total of 71,355 fairgoers on Sunday, September 1st.

State Fair Executive Director Joseph McDermott says, "This single day attendance record surpassed our previous record of 67,929 on the same Sunday in 2011. It was only 367 visitors short of the all-time State Fair single day attendance record of 71,627 set in 2009, (which was) the final year the State Fair was in Lincoln."

McDermott said the hot summertime heat certainly played a factor in lower attendance for the first 9 days of the fair. Temperatures were higher than weeks previous to the start of the fair. Attendance was down .6 percent from last year with 334,931, which was 2,056 visitors behind 2012. "The one thing we're not able to control is the weather, but we rallied the final two days of the fair when even Labor Day attendance was 3,500 higher than the same day a year ago," said McDermott.

Each year, the Nebraska State Fair contracts with EventCorp Services to conduct electronic surveys on the fairgrounds to learn what fairgoers are thinking day by day. While the full electronic survey has not been tabulated, McDermott said, "We do know that 60% of our attendance came from Grand Island and Central Nebraska and 17% came from Lincoln and Omaha. The Lincoln/Omaha numbers are up a percentage point over 2012."

State Fair Board chair Jana Kruger from Arlington, Neb., said, "Given our survey results, we know we're continuing to do the right thing year after year to keep folks coming back for more. Over 93% of survey respondents said they would recommend the Nebraska State Fair to others. We're pleased we're able to provide a family friendly venue for all of our visitors."

Kruger added, "We want to thank all our guests, and we are hopeful that each of them will continue to visit and tell others what they may be missing if they haven't attended. This is truly a family event, and we don't spare anything to make it better each year."

It's not too early to start planning for a visit to the 2014 Nebraska State Fair. It will run August 22nd through September 1st.

--Nebraska Press Association