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Arena adds fun to fair

Horse shows to return after a long absence

By Andrea Uhde

auhde@courier-journal.com

Ever since I first met Kathy Hockersmith, she's been talking about her dream of having horse shows at the Oldham County Fair.

And when I brought up the topic last week, she nearly burst with happiness.

"It's awesome!" she piped up. "I am so excited!"

For the first time in more than a decade, Oldham's fair, which starts Tuesday, will have horse shows and contests made possible by a brand new \$15,000 outdoor arena.

Hockersmith, a Westport resident and fair board leader, said the arena was finished in the spring and already has been used by some 4-H groups.

The fair runs through July 26 with all the hoopla fairs are known for: games, yummy foods, petting barns and an assortment of contests for smiles, babies and talent. Oh, and the traditional and ear-popping Demolition Derby will be at 8 p.m. July 25.

There are a ton of other events, which we'll have posted on our Web site, www.courier-journal.com.

I have to admit, I'm most intrigued by the "alpaca agility show" at 7 p.m. July 23. I think they've been fooling me all these years, making me think they barely moved.

The all-breed horse show is at 5 p.m. Tuesday and features walking, trotting and cantering competitions. The horse contest show starts at 9 a.m. July 26 and includes speed races and games such as having riders carry an apple on a spoon while racing across the arena. Participants can sign up the day of the competitions.

Horses have been at the fair the past few years but only for classes and petting -- nothing like these shows, said Rae Anne Roley, who's overseeing the horse events.

"Oldham County used to have the largest saddlebred horse show in the state before the state fair," Roley said. "Getting horses back to Oldham County is a very big deal."

There haven't been horse shows because motor sports took over the former horse arena, leaving car parts and pieces of glass.

"It was not good on the horses' legs," Roley said.

The new arena will be specifically for animals, and Roley said hopes are that it will be a place where 4-H groups can practice.

But even if you don't like horses, the fair has everything from a psychic and magic shows to cookie decorating and an Elvis impersonator. And as the rocker himself might say, Viva La Grange.

Reporter Andrea Uhde can be reached at (502) 582-4663.
