

The Daily Union

Saturday Article: June 22, 2019

Title: Fair Time is Near!!!

The Geary County Free Fair is just around the corner – July 22-25 2019. This is a family-friendly, community centered, fun annual event for Geary County and area residents. Now is the perfect time to consider how you can get involved as an exhibitor! Here are some quick and handy tidbits that might whet your curiosity and get involved. Although many of the activities at the county fair are centered around showcase the learning, hard work, and leadership development in our local 4-H youth, it is also a time for the public to join in the fun. You can participate, too! The Geary County Open Class free fair is designed for youth and adults who are not involved in the 4-H Youth Development program.

Q: Why would I want to enter an exhibit into the open class fair?

A: It's fun, educational, and you can meet other people with similar interests. Perhaps you have a hobby that you would like others to see, or perhaps you are babysitting your 5-year-old grandson and have completed some craft projects that could be entered. Regardless of your age or interests, there is something for everyone at the Geary County Free Open Class Fair.

Q: Who can participate in the open class fair events?

A: Any person who lives in Geary County, Fort Riley, or surrounding counties can participate in the open class events.

Q: How old to you have to be to participate?

A: There is no age limit, but there is a minimum age of 4. Children age 4 to 15 can enter in the youth division and a judged separately from those 16 years of age and older.

Q: How is open class events different from 4-H events?

A: Participants in open class are not and cannot participate in 4-H events. The open class events are designed for the public. Although children have the opportunity to join a 4-H group, not all children choose to do so. Open class events offer them a place to enter and display their products. For example, if a child has participated in a summer art camp, they can enter one of their projects in open class arts & crafts. Another example would be an adult who likes to make leather-tooled products such as a wallet who enters one of their products in the crafts division.

Q: What kinds of products can be entered in the open class fair?

A: In a word: Anything. There are 8 departments that include a variety of classes in each – totaling over 350 classes that products can be entered in to. Participants can enter 3 products for each class. Departments include: Food Preparation, Food Preservation, Textiles, Arts & Crafts, Photography, Floriculture, Horticulture, and Agriculture. Each Department includes many individual divisions so there are many opportunities for you to exhibit something you have created or grown.

Q: Do entries have to be created/made by the person entering the product?

A: All work must be the work of the person entering the exhibit. It must have been completed within the past two years (July 2018 – July 2019) except for food preservation products which must have been preserved since July of 2018. Work not done by the participant can be displayed but will NOT be judged and will not be eligible for prizes. Additionally, articles that have previously been entered are not eligible for competition.

Q: Are there prizes given out?

A: YES! All exhibits receive ribbon awards. Children and adults alike, appreciate recognition for their hard work and attention to detail. They can earn that recognition when they enter an exhibit in the fair. Champion and Reserve Champion ribbons are awarded in each division, if the judge determines the entries merit such recognition. A small cash award is provided to the Champion and/or Reserve Champion. Special prizes are designated for the Baking Contest and for the Case for a Cause Pillowcase Project thanks to donations from a variety of businesses and organizations.

Even though the fair isn't until next month, now is the time for you to consider how you can get involved and become an exhibitor. It might take you a bit of time to create your exhibit so start now!

There is no cost to enter your exhibit. What do you like to do in your spare time? If you paint, you can enter your work in the Arts & Crafts Division. Perhaps you enjoy taking pictures of the people, places, and things around you – you can enter that in the Photography Division. Stop by the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office to pick up your free Open Class fair book that outlines the rules for each contest. Our office is located at 119 E. 9th Street in Junction City, Kansas. You can also access the Open Class Fair Book along with other helpful information about the fair at: https://www.geary.k-state.edu/county_fair/index.html.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2019 Geary County Free Fair. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!