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Perfect Day for a Stoddard County Parade

SEPTEMBER 17TH 2013 BY STAFF WRITER

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*Submitted by
SMT Writer*

Eighty-Six Years and Going Strong!!

Dexter, Missouri - The detail shops around town are busy in preparation for tonight's Stoddard County Parade. The long lineup of emergency vehicles, bands, floats and fun will be gathering at the North end of Stoddard Street as the parade watchers fill the sidewalks.

The tradition of the Stoddard County Parade and Fair dates back as far as 1917 when the carnival came to town and setup near the old National Guard Armory. The story is told they would begin to march to the fair down Stoddard Street to Locust Street and on to the fair grounds. It the 1960's, it was decided to move the East City Park area in Dexter.

The earlier version of the Dexter Jaycees managed and organized the Fair activities until the 1970's, when the Dexter Fair Board assumed the role for the fair. The Fair Board was handed the reigns of the parade from the Dexter Lions Club for the Stoddard County Parade in the early 90's and have been duly assigned ever since.

When it comes to an event of this magnitude, there are some real key individuals that selflessly give of their personal time, vacations, and work to make these events happen.

It's a year around job many times and many don't realize the dedication involved.

"My brother-in-law says 'there is a fine line between a dedicated person and a stupid person,'" says Sam Huey Jr. "... and my family thinks I might have crossed that line."

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Sam Huey Jr. has been involved with the Stoddard County Fair for nearly 40 years. He started working with the fair through the Jaycees in 1973. A short move from Dexter brought him back in 1979, and he has been a permanent fixture to the fair every since.

Unlike any other year, Sam donates one of his vacation weeks for this affair.

"There is a lot to get done to be prepared," added Huey. "It's really something that I have enjoyed doing."

Other members of the Stoddard County Fair Board that continue their passionate work each year are Sam's wife, Robin Huey, Pam and Amy Dowdy, John Dowdy, Kevin Holman, this years chairman, Bud Parsons, and countless others that give of themselves to put the smiles on the faces of Stoddard Countians.

The Fair Board is engaged on many levels preparing, upgrading, and sponsoring other event throughout the year. The events range from rodeos to truck and tractor pulls to demolition derby's. There is also work involved as they board is busy upgrading the fair grounds for this annual festival.

The group attends the annual Fair and Festival Conference each year to stay abreast of the latest ideas that help to make the Stoddard County Fair a great success.

When asked "What keeps you all going every year? Pure Desperation," was Huey's reply.

"For the most part, we are a non-profit organization," explained Sam. "The fair is our main money maker each year but allows us the ability to make the necessary upgrades and expansions to the grounds that are needed."

As you are around the fairground this year, you will see some of those upgrades to the tune of \$80,000 in improvements to the 4-H Building, the new bathroom facilities and the new stage the strong lineup of entertainers this year. The Fair Board even partnered with the City of Dexter when the pressurized sewer system was installed at the East City Park.

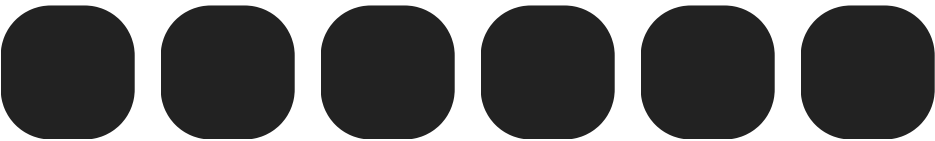
"We are constantly trying to improve something," noted Huey.

The Dexter Fair Board encourages all area residents to make time to come and be a part of the festivities tonight and each night this week.

LAST UPDATED ON SEPTEMBER 17TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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