



Carnival rides stand dormant for most of the year, but once the fair rolls around, they are put to good use. The carnival runs from 7 to 11 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday, July 31 to Aug. 4.

TOMI MILLER/Colby Free Press

## Fair carnival needs volunteers

By Sam Dieter

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The carnival at the Thomas County Fair is back, and it still needs a few more helping hands to operate games and rides and help set up for the week.

"It's very hard getting volunteers," said Wanda Brown with the Thomas County Amusement Association. "It's all run by volunteers."

Brown, who as a board member is a volunteer with the association, said that about more 90 people are needed each night to keep the games and the prize booth running.

The carnival runs from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday during the fair. Each volunteer will work a roughly two-hour shift during the first or the second half of the night. About 325 people in all are needed to run the carnival, Brown said.

For the most part, help comes to the fair by way of businesses that adopt a ride or a game, then bring in all of the volunteers needed to

keep it running.

"Every ride that's run by a business, then they're free to take out a banner and advertisement," Brown added.

The carnival started when traveling shows stopped coming to Colby, she said, and has grown over the years to included 10 rides and 13 games, ranging from the Zipper and the children's swing to remote-control cars.

"It's a lot of work to get ready for," Brown said, "but when it's all done and over, it's very rewarding because a lot of the kids come out and have a great time."

Tickets at the carnival cost 50 cents. Most rides and games require two tickets, although some of the bigger rides take three and some of the games cost just one.

On Tuesday night, however, the first 300 people at the ticket booth will get five free tickets for every 20 that they buy. The first 100 people to stop by the Farmers and Merchants Bank downtown will be able to get a wristband for all rides all night Tuesday for \$5. On Saturday night, visitors will be able to buy a wristband for every ride for \$10.

## Foundation takes on fund for money for carnival rides

By Christina Beringer

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In 2007, the Thomas County Community Foundation became home to a fund that raises money for carnival rides for the Thomas County Free Fair.

Thanks in large part to donations from Farmers and Merchants Bank of Colby, the Pete Henry Foundation and Western Sprinklers, the Farmers and Merchants Thomas County Amusement Fund continues to support the carnival's need for new rides and equipment.

Most recently, the fund received a \$5,000 contribution from the Henry Foundation, said Melinda Olson, foundation executive director. To date, a total of \$55,000 has been donated to the fund.

Olson said the fund was established to help purchase new child-friendly rides for the Thomas County Amusement Association, which runs the carnival. In 2008, the group bought a carousel and fun slide for almost \$90,000. Donations to the fund helped pay off the balance, she said.

"We are happy to help out the Thomas County Amusement Association in this way,"

said Brent Wiedeman, president of Farmers and Merchants Bank and co-founder of the fund. "The volunteers on this board work very hard to provide us with great fair rides for our families, and we appreciate all that they do."

The association has operated a home-owned carnival since 2003 and today owns 10 rides which are operated by volunteers each night of the fair, said Wanda Brown, an association board member.

"The fund has been very beneficial to the operation of the carnival," said association President Kerry Wark, "keeping it up and improving it all the time."

"Donations are always appreciated to help pay for updates for the fair rides," said Olson. "If you would like to donate to the fund, please send your tax-deductible check to the Thomas County Community Foundation with "Amusement Fund" in the memo section."

Donations can be mailed to 350 S. Range Ave., Suite 14, Colby, Kan., 67701.

Members of the foundation board will be present to answer questions about this fund and many others during their annual Free Fair Breakfast sponsored by the agency from 7:30 to 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 2, in the 4-H Building.

*Good luck 4-Her with all of your exhibits!*

CORNERSTONE



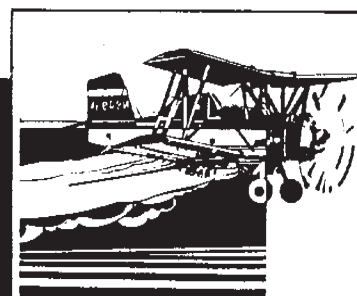
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and enjoy it!*

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