

Have no fear! Carnival will again be here

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“A fair just isn’t a fair without a carnival,” according to Kerry Wark, president of the Thomas County Amusement Association.

And year after year, the nonprofit organization has stepped up to the plate. Begun in 2002, this will be the 10th carnival provided through local volunteer efforts, running Tuesday through Saturday.

Judging by ticket sales, the Zipper is by far the most popular ride for older kids and adults, according to former board member Wanda Brown. Other great rides are the Tilt-a-Whirl, the Paratrooper and the Scrambler.

For the younger kids, the carousel, bought with the help of a grant from the Thomas County Community Foundation, is popular. Other attractions, such as the pony cart ride and swings, are for even smaller children.

Some of the lines, though, are for attractions other than rides. The Superslide is one of these, where kids wait for the chance to climb – and climb – and climb – to the top, just for the sheer pleasure of sliding down again. The Bouncy Castle offers another workout as kids jump around in an inflatable structure.

Brown, who stepped down as a board member but still volunteers, said the booths are just as important to the carnival as the rides. There are 10 games, she said, along with a busy prize booth, including everything from a fish pond for little ones to a baseball throw for older youths. Plinko and the Ring Toss are favorites, she said, though all keep busy.

The 4-H clubs run Putt-Putt Golf, she said, but all the other activities need volunteers. About 40 individuals are needed every night of the carnival to staff the game booths.

According to Wark, many of the rides are run by local businesses, who take the responsibility of scheduling volunteers to staff them. The games, though, are more dependent on individuals stepping forward to get involved.

The nonprofit organization began in 2002, when carnivals were becoming hard to come by, and has been in operation for 10 years. Wark, who has headed it since the beginning, says it’s becoming harder and harder to get volunteers.



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

Kids have been reaching great heights at the Thomas County Fair Carnival for years, and the tradition will continue with many popular rides.

“It’s a whole different group now; the people whose kids are grown are ready to step aside and new faces are needed,” he said.

Brown seconded that, saying she would like to see some younger people on the board as well.

She said donations and grants have im-

proved the carnival over the years, as ticket sales are only enough to pay for prizes and insurance.

“I look at how far we’ve come in the last 10 years,” Brown said, “and I’m amazed, but without people running it, it’s not going to go any farther.”

As of last Friday, there were 109 open spots for volunteers; each slot is two hours. Anyone willing to fill a time, especially from 9 to 11 p.m., is encouraged to call the Chamber Office, 460-3401, and let them know.

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