

Devon Enjoys Huge Growth, Booming Economy

DEVON (Chester Co.) — The Devon Horse Show and Country Fair is in the forefront of a wave of prosperity that is sweeping over the horse show industry.

Devon is the largest, oldest, and most prestigious outdoor horse show in the country, but due to the large number of entries received annually, Devon now limits most classes to those horses who have amassed the most points in other horse shows during the previous year.

The horse show, May 22-30, benefits the Bryn Mawr Hospital to which it donated almost \$9 million over the past eight decades.

Attendance at the popular Main Line event has grown every year, and paid attendance last year was 109,798. Adding to this number exhibitors, owners, trainers, and riders would more than double it.

The enthusiastic crowds, plus exhibitors that come from all over the country and from as far away as Florida and California, have resulted in sponsorships from both local and national companies and corporations.

Last year, there were 27 companies that supplied sponsorship ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000. And this year, there are already eight new sponsors anxious to jump onto the booming Devon bandwagon.

Along with many local businesses, a number of national corporations, including such giants as Anheuser-Busch and British Airways, are also major sponsors.

The cost of sponsoring a fence at Devon begins at \$2,000, and having a banner on one of the buildings surrounding the Dixon Oval ranges from \$10,000 up.

Leonard A. King, Devon president, a member of the sponsorship committee chaired by Richard M. O'Donnell, a vice president, and his co-chairman, Robert McKiernan, with the other committee members, lead an active effort to recruit new sponsors.

James M. Ballengee, vice president and treasurer, has begun a massive campaign to raise corporate money, and Mrs. Philip L. Kampf, vice president and secretary, is responsible for another big money-maker, the advertising in the horse show program.

Sponsors reach not only the spectators and exhibitors at the show.

In 1997, 82 papers reaching more than 8.2 million readers generated 349 stories on the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair. In addition, four papers devoted special pull-out sections to the show, plus there were daily television and radio reports on the show.

Devon is the tip of the iceberg. There are thousands of horse shows annually throughout the country, and every weekend in Chester and Delaware counties, as well as surrounding areas, anywhere from four to 11 horse shows are held every weekend.

During the winter, local shows move into indoor arenas, most of which have heated observation rooms.

But many Delaware Valley exhibitors pack up and move to Florida for the 10 weeks of the

Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington and Tampa.

Underscoring the booming economy of horse shows, entries in Wellington have swelled by more than 500 percent over the last 10 years.

Due to space constriction, Devon can't accept the huge numbers of exhibitors. However, through its qualification system, it accepts only the best.

Horses and ponies that compete at Devon are worth hundreds of thousands each, with the prices of top jumpers reaching \$1 million.

Devon not only draws the creme de la creme to compete in its main arena, the Dixon Oval, including Olympic veterans and World Champions, but the show also brings million of dollars into the local economy.

Hotel and motel rooms in the surrounding area are sold out months in advance of the show and restaurants enjoy a huge boost. Business that profit from Devon exhibitors include rental cars, air lines, cleaners, liquor stores, and local convenience stores.

The Devon Horse Show and Country Fair begins with junior weekend May 22 and Saturday, May 23.

The Carriage Pleasure Drive, beginning as usual at Blackburn Farm on Sunday, begins seven days of exciting competition between top hunters, jumpers, three- and five-gaited horses, fine harness horses, hackneys,

roadsters and four-in-hand coaches.

Two new divisions are featured this year, Pony Pairs, with three classes Monday evening, and a Country Pleasure horse section. Nine four-in-hands will compete in evening classes Monday through Friday.

On Sunday evening, three of the four-in-hand exhibitors, John Landon, Louisa Plummer and Harry Witteveen, will present an exhibition of random driving in which three horses, only one of which is in shafts, are presented one behind the other. It is the height of difficulty in driving.

Two world champion frisbee dogs, the National Capital Air Canines, will perform Saturday evening, May 23, through Monday evening.

The Budweiser Clydesdales will perform in exhibition Wednesday through Saturday.

The Country Fair, featuring almost 40 shops and boutiques, includes a wide variety of enticing merchandise. For youngsters, the fair features a Ferris wheel and merry go-round plus many games.

General admission for adults is \$5 if purchased in advance or \$6 at the gate. Children under 12 are \$2.50 in advance or \$3 at the gate. Senior citizens are \$4. Reserved seats are available at an additional cost. Tickets may be purchased in advance at the show grounds.

For ticket information, call (610) 688-2554.

Winners Of Public Speaking Contest Announced

SUNBURY (Northumberland Co.) — Robert F. Pardoe Jr., chairman of the Northumberland County Conservation District board of directors, announced the top three place finishes in the Zimmerman Dodge Public Speaking contest held recently, cosponsored by Zimmerman Motors, Sunbury, and the conservation district.

Joy Leshner, a 12th grade student at Line Mountain High School, was the top scorer with her speech, "Erosion: Washing Away a Dirty Problem." The speech discussed the causes and effects of soil erosion.

Placing second was Tim Furman, an 11th grade student from Sunbury Christian Academy, whose speech, entitled "Magnetism and Improved Plant Growth," discussed the effects of biomagnetism and an experiment he conducted using magnets.

Corey Kinger, a 12th grade student from Mt. Carmel Area High

school, placed third with her speech on "Our Precious Waters," dealing with threats to water quality.

Six students presented speeches for the contest, which was held Feb. 3 at Line Mountain High School near Mandata. Speeches were first judged on the basis of a written manuscript submitted prior to their oral presentations. Scores from both the written and oral segments were combined to determine final scores.

Zimmerman Motors provided the three place finishers with cash awards in the amounts of \$150, \$100, and \$50, respectively. The conservation district provided recognition certificates to all students who entered the contest.

First place finisher, Joy Leshner, will give her speech at the Northumberland County Conservation District annual awards banquet scheduled for March 12, at Shikellamy High School, Sunbury.



Caramel apples, the ferris wheel, and boutique shopping plus exciting show jumping competitions draw huge crowds annually to the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair, May 22-30.

Simmental Juniors Face Busy Summer

BOZEMAN, Mont. — Junior members of the American Simmental Association (ASA) are looking forward to a summer filled with enjoyable, beef industry-related competition.

Four Regional Classics during the month of June, followed by National Classic XVIII, are on the upcoming calendar of events.

Regional Classics, patterned after the National Classic, are planned at four wide-ranging locations. "There is a regional event within reasonable driving distance of almost 90 percent of our membership," said Ryan Altenburg, the American Junior Simmental Association (AJSA) president from Fort Collins, Colo.

"Regional Classics are a great way to become involved and to get warmed up for the National event," Altenburg explained. "We urge our members to prepare for the National Classic by studying and working at home, and by attending one or more Regional Classics."

Regional Classics are scheduled as follows; south-central region, June 18-20, Springfield, Mo.; north central region, June 18-20, Minot, N.D.; western region, June 22-24, Prineville, Ore.; and eastern region, June 25-27, at Clemson, S.C.

National Classic XVIII, traditionally the highlight of the AJSA year, will be held July 6-10 in Columbus, Ohio. ASA staff members are working closely with the Ohio Simmental Association (OSA) and Ohio State University Animal Science faculty in coordinating the event. It is being jointly planned in conjunction with the American Gelbvieh Association's annual youth event.

The Radisson-North in Columbus will serve as ASA Classic Headquarters, while all cattle events will be centered at the spacious Ohio Expo Center, site of the annual Ohio State Fair.

Up to 250 AJSA members are expected to participate in junior and senior divisions. Competition is held in a variety of cattle-related categories, including a herdsman's quiz, sire summary quiz, beef bowl, public speaking, sales talk, heifer exhibition, showmanship, advertising and promotion, and job interviewing.

Extra curricular activities on the schedule include a dance, a volleyball tournament, a barbecue cook-out, and a festive awards banquet. Also, the OSA is coordinating an area in which parents can congregate.

JUNE DAIRY MONTH