Trey and Ryleigh McCrumb take a spin on the jumping motorcycles at the Chase County Fair last week in Imperial.

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Another successful run of the Chase County Fair & Expo went into the books Sunday with the completion of the final event—the antique tractor pull.

One thing that made this fair different came by way of the weather—with the exception of Wednesday, temperatures never got out of the 80s.

Typically, it's in the high 90s or low 100s during fair. One has to look back to 2006 for similar temperatures during fair week.

Dave Schilke, fair board president, said the cool weather “saved us” by increasing crowds. “The last four days were perfect,” he added.

The crowds were great, he said. “There were people all over the grounds Friday and Saturday.”

Saturday’s crowd for the parade was an indicator of a big crowd for the fair, with people lined up on both sides of the street.

Schilke said the weather helped walk-up ticket sales for the concerts each night.

Even with that walk-up, this year’s concert attendance didn’t match up to last year.

Friday night, 61 percent of the tickets were sold for the Hunter Hayes and Travis Tritt show, yielding an attendance of 2,268.

On Saturday, 59 percent of the tickets were sold with 2,186 in attendance for the Brian Howe/Theory of a Deadman concert.

Those numbers compare to 75 percent and 82 percent respectively last year.

Schilke said last year’s results were exceptional due to The Band Perry, who were on the verge of becoming country music sensations when they came to the fair.

Volunteer efforts key

Schilke praised the efforts of the many volunteers who pitched in to assist with fair activities. “A lot of people donate their time to help make this fair successful.”

He also credited his fellow members on the fair board. People have no idea of the amount of time devoted by board members, he said.

It’s more than just fair week, he added. For board members, it’s a year-round duty preparing for the week-long event.

2012 Benefactor support up

Schilke said support for the fair continues to grow with patrons as evidenced by the benefactor program.

Last year, a total of 61 corporate sponsors signed on to support fair activities.

This year, that number jumped to 75, with one Platinum Sponsor, two Gold Sponsors, 13 Silver Sponsors and 59 Bronze Sponsors.

This year also marked a first for the sponsor program with the fair’s first-ever Platinum sponsor—Great Plains Communications.

Funds from the benefactor program are earmarked for improvements to the grounds.

Schilke said the fair board is planning to build a new expo hall in the coming year to replace the hall on the east edge of the expo grounds.

He said they are considering a new location for the building, which would be southeast of the show arena and north of the women's rest room.

Benefactor funds will be used to help defer the cost of the new building

Planning begins

Schilke said fair board members will meet in the next several weeks to review this year's fair.

The exchange of ideas that results always helps to improve the various aspects of the fair, he added.

The dates for next year's fair will be Saturday, Aug. 10 through Sunday, Aug. 18.