

Week of August 10, 2009



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Missouri State Fair

Like most Missourians, I have great childhood memories of the Missouri State Fair. Growing up, my father, Clarence Pearce, served as the local FFA advisor, and our chapter was in charge of the FFA Children's Barnyard at the fair. Each summer, my father took my older brother and me to the fair to help the older FFA members with the Children's Barnyard. I had the opportunity to stay at the barnyard and help take care of the animals. It was great fun, but also a lot of hard work. I guess at an early age I fell in love with the fair. And for that reason, I like to attend the State Fair and relive some of those great memories.

This time-honored Missouri tradition kicks off this week at the state fairgrounds in Sedalia, offering 11 days of affordable family fun. From August 13–23, Missourians from across the state will gather at the Missouri State Fair for rides, good food, top-notch entertainment (much of it free) and a celebration of one of Missouri's top industries—agriculture. The fair's success is a testament to the strength of agriculture and agribusiness in our state. This year's theme is "MOre Fun than Ever!"—an appropriate choice given the limitless opportunities for fun and excitement that fair organizers have planned for families of all ages.

The Missouri State Fair provides visitors with concerts from some of music's biggest stars, exciting rodeo action, tractor pulls, livestock shows, numerous 4-H and FFA contests for participants of all ages, as well as informational exhibits. Thrill-seekers can also visit the exciting carnival midway, and of course, there is never a shortage of delicious fair food. A recent addition to the state fair is the Farmers Market, where visitors can buy fresh produce and other food-related items directly from Missouri's finest farmers.

Beyond the historical and traditional elements of the fair, this annual state event provides entertainment for family members of all ages—much of it free to attend. Some of this year’s free events include a circus under the big top, a comedy Wild West show and a new rainforest experience. Hundreds of free demonstrations and exhibits highlighting agriculture innovation, green initiatives and timely consumer topics are also available to fairgoers. A new attraction this year is the “Rural Lifestyles Showcase,” which is designed for those interested in incorporating rural lifestyle activities into their lives. According to fair officials, the activities featured in the showcase are aimed at encouraging a relaxed, traditional and family-oriented lifestyle—an increasingly popular trend in America.

The state fair is also a great entertainment value for families. Children age 12 and under are admitted free every day and parking is always free. Dollar Day (Aug. 13 – Opening Day) allows adults to enjoy the fair for only \$1 admission and also features \$1 specials throughout the fairgrounds. Adults visiting the fair on Aug. 20, the second Thursday of the event, will gain admission for \$2. Fair Finale Day (Aug. 23) admission prices for adults are only \$4, and every day after 5 p.m., fair prices are just \$5. Regular daily senior admission tickets are just \$6 and adult admission tickets are \$8.

It takes organization, cooperation, and thousands of dedicated, responsible individuals to organize and operate the Missouri State Fair. I encourage you to plan your visit to the state fair in the coming days. Help support one of our state’s oldest summertime events and see the remarkable, rich tradition unfold while enjoying affordable entertainment for your whole family. For more information on the state fair, visit www.mostatefair.com. And of course, if you go to the State Fair, be sure and stop by and see the FFA Children's Barnyard.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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