

# Michigan State Fair brings old favorites and new events

BY SHARON DARGAY  
STAFF WRITER

Sure, you'll find a few new wrinkles — new pedestrian entrance, a visit by Thomas the Tank Engine — at this year's Michigan State Fair, which begins Tuesday, Aug. 20.

But the significant changes are in the wings for the 2003 fair.

"Next year, what will happen is the Michigan State Fair will go to a three-weekend state fair," said General Manager John C. Hertel, speaking before members of the press and sponsors at a fair preview on Thursday. "We'll start four days earlier. Instead of two weekends, we'll have three. And one weekend will coincide with the Dream Cruise. I'm certain we'll do some special auto displays."

The fair will run full days, from 10 a.m.-midnight, Friday through Sunday, next year, but open at 4 p.m. on weekdays.

"During the week next year, we will go to an after school

start," Hertel said.

He said daytime weekday attendance lags during the fair's second week, when many school districts start fall classes. He estimated total fair attendance at 450,000-500,000 last year.

"Even during that first week when kids are not in school, it takes a while for people to get into the mode of understanding that the Michigan State Fair is on," he added.

The fair will offer bargain admission to midway rides during the fair's early four-day start next year.

And this year? Hertel calls the fair "the best entertainment value in the state — maybe in the Midwest."

"You can bring a picnic lunch. You don't have to spend a lot of money on food. It's the fifth year in a row we've had the same (admission) price," he said.

"It is America's safest and cleanest state fair."

Now this year are:

■ A stage show starring,

A complete schedule, and a second story on State Fair musical events is on the next page, B5.

Thomas the Tank Engine aimed at children under 6.

■ An antique tractor exhibit  
■ The Department of Natural Resources and Huron-Clinton Metroparks team up to bring additional wildlife displays to the Outdoor Zone, a two-acre nature area at the fair. Visitors can use binoculars to spot and identify ducks, try on a fish mask, negotiate a straw bale maze, play disc golf, handle live reptiles, catch and release fish, shoot a pellet gun and try archery.

■ DaimlerChrysler will sponsor the Outdoor Zone this year. General Motors lends its support to the contest pavilion.

"Before 1998, we probably weren't doing even a dozen contests during the fair," said Pat Boyer, Sterling Heights, a

former fair volunteer who now supervises the fair's 500 volunteers and grounds activities, including contests.

"Now we do three contests a day and four on weekends."

Most contests are open to all ages and everyone wins at least an honorable mention. The fair keeps track of winners from year to year — and awards plaques — in some favorite competitions, including the husband and wife calling contest. In others, the top three contestants receive medals.

Boyer, the mother of four children, used her experience as a Girl Scout and Brownie Scout leader to create contests like "bee ball" and "whining." "We'll have a stuffed (toy) bee and the kids will toss it around like a hot potato," Boyer explained. "The whining contest came right out of the husband and wife calling contest."

It's aimed at children, but anyone with an ear-grating whine can give it their best effort.

"Eating contests are very popular. We have corn eating and pie eating, pudding slurp, apple sauce slurp."

If you plan to enter a contest at the fair, arrive about a half hour before it starts and have fun, Boyer suggested.

Contests run at 1:30, 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. every day. An additional contest is scheduled at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Contest highlights:

Tuesday, Aug. 20 — Somersault race, balloon run, ping pong toss.

Wednesday, Aug. 21 — Bee ball, busy bee, spaghetti eating.

Thursday, Aug. 22 — Baseball toss, asparagus shuttle, balloon blowing.

Friday, Aug. 23 — Disc golf, cherry split, cherry pie eating.

Saturday, Aug. 24 — Grape race, grape smash, hog calling, milk mustache, whining.



PHOTOS BY JERRY ZOLNERT/JOSEPH

Ginger Conyer of Ed's Popcorn stuffs cotton candy into bags.

Sunday, Aug. 25 — Basketball toss, cheese please, bubble gum blowing, big cheese.

Monday, Aug. 26 — Senior contests, carrot drop, hot potato, potato sack race.

Tuesday, Aug. 27 — Soccer toss, hedge trimming, rope skipping.

Wednesday, Aug. 28 — Ring toss, don't spill the beans, corn eating.

Thursday, Aug. 29 — Apple run, water balloon toss, apple sauce slurp.

Friday, Aug. 30 — Christmas

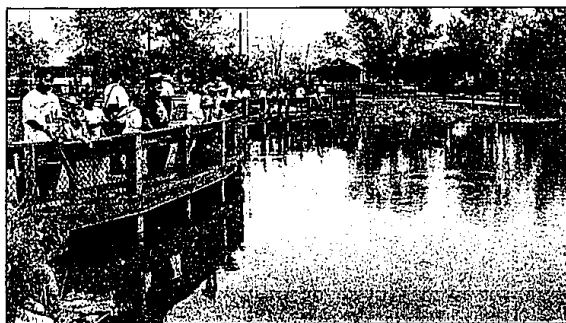
tree decorating, cookie stack, doughnut eating, parent/kid calling.

Saturday, Aug. 31 — Football pass, soccer kick, bean bag toss, longest ponytail, hula hoop.

Sunday, Sept. 1 — The Sweep, horse shoe toss, husband and wife calling, egg throw, pudding slurp.

Monday, Sept. 2 — Sack race, sheep herding, wheel toss, balloon break.

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Kids fish off the railing at the nature pond at the State Fair Grounds.

## WHAT'S BEHIND THE MASK?

What do Janet Jackson, Former President Gerald Ford, Ozzy Osbourne and David Copperfield all have in common?

They've all painted masks as part of The Mask Project 2 to benefit Hospice of Michigan!

Take a peek and see some of the masks now on exhibit at The Westin Hotel, Southfield August 3-18 and the Southfield Town Center Garden Atrium, 2000 Town Center, August 19-22. You may also visit [www.hom.org](http://www.hom.org) for a chance at owning a celebrity's mask masterpiece!

the mask project 2

Local celebrity masks include: Actor Tim Allen, U-M Football Coach Bo Schembechler, Weatherman Sonny Elliot, WDIV News Anchor Carmen Harlan, and Detroit Red Wings Karen Newman.

@POP GALLERY Detroit Artists



Tara Hackett



Joe Michael



Ryan C. Lee



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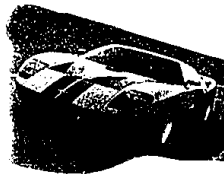
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## Revvin' with FORD. CONTEST



WIN 2 VIP PASSES + PARKING TO "IMPACT AT FORD FIELD"

A \$1,000 Value! Courtesy of Revvin' with Ford IMPACT AT FORD FIELD, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

will be the first official entertainment event hosted in Ford Field stadium. Guests attending the event will enjoy an extravaganza featuring some of the finest voices from Broadway and the recording industry, incredible local talent, special effects and other surprises. **YOU COULD WIN!**—VIP guests will enjoy a red carpet Hollywood-style arrival prior to a private reception featuring local musical entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, refreshments, and a live and silent auction to benefit charity. VIP guests will then be escorted to the field for a five-course meal. Answer the questions below and enter to win!

Visit Revvin' with Ford August 17th for cars, stars and family fun in Downtown Birmingham. For information on tickets for the August 16th Charity Preview Party, call (248) 644-5832 or visit [www.revvinwithford.com](http://www.revvinwithford.com)

### RULES

1. Contest is open to all adults.
2. There will be only one winner.
3. Entries must be postmarked no later than August 15, 2002.
4. Winner will be announced in The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.
5. Answers may be placed on a postcard and mailed to:

Revvin' with Ford Contest

Observer & Eccentric

NEWSPAPERS  
36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia MI 48150  
Attention: Cathy Young,  
Promotion Manager

### CONTEST

Clip and put on a postcard—Answers to the three questions below are your entry to win a drawing for 2 VIP tickets to "Impact At Ford Field," courtesy of Revvin' with Ford.

1. In what model year was the Ford Thunderbird first available?  
☐ 1950 ☐ 1955 ☐ 1962

2. How many years in a row did the GT40 win the LeMans 24-Hour Race?  
☐ Two ☐ Four ☐ Five

3. What was the average cost of a car in 1957?  
☐ \$2,750 ☐ \$5,250 ☐ \$10,000