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WHY THE SHORT DRIVE IS WORTH IT

Spending a Day with Nebraska State Fair, the State's Largest Event

Grand Island, NE – In some parts of the country, driving 100 miles for a good steak is a no different routine than feeding the dog. Nebraska State Fair, with 149 years of legacy for Nebraskans, is of similar routine for hundreds of thousands making the annual trek to Grand Island.

“The question is, why do they come; why are they so loyal?” asked Lori Cox, State Fair executive director. “People tell us it’s more than tradition. It’s an emotional experience for families doing things they wouldn’t normally do.”

The 2018 State Fair is no stranger to finding unique attractions such as this year’s Live Shark Encounter or Sea Lion Splash. Apart from this year’s concert lineup, including hot acts such as Kelly Clarkson, Sugarland and Old Dominion, the State Fair is offering bundle buys for the first time. Jace Robinson, marketing director, said that these deals make any trip from anywhere more affordable.

“The discounted foodie bundle gives fairgoers a chance to sample great new foods like gourmet mac-n-cheese or stuffed cucumbers,” he said. “We also added a date pack for the sweethearts out there. Discounts at the gate and carnival rides make for a great day.”

Capitalizing on experience is important according to Cox. “The move to Grand Island was a feat of Nebraskan perseverance, and it shows in these remarkable facilities,” she said. “But beyond that, we are growing our external landscape to enrich activities and entertainment offerings.” Cox said one area of growth is the Pump & Pantry Party Pit, an area just off of the Aurora Cooperative Pavilion.

“This area, which was the Good Life tent previously, has been expanded to encompass the Bristol Stage. Now you’ll find entertainment such as good bands, a beverage station and activities for family members – with shade!” she added.

The Nebraska State Fair presents 63 different food stands for the culinary voyager, from nut sundaes on a stick to tamale slammers to prime rib at the Beef Pit. At the Wade Shows Carnival, 44 rides from the new super spectacular Bumper Boats and the Fighter, to popular thrills such as Avengers and Tornado. “Wade Shows is ranked in the top five of amusement companies,” said Robinson. “It’s also one of the greenest carnivals on the road today, with initiatives toward LED lighting, fuel-efficient generators, Biodiesel use, and recycling programs.”

The 2018 Nebraska State Fair runs August 24 through September 3 in Grand Island. Ticket discounts are currently available at all Pump & Pantry locations or online **at StateFair.org**. Bundle prices, entertainment information and a schedule of events can be found online.

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