



P.O. Box 1387 • 501 E Fonner Park Road, Suite 200 • Grand Island, NE 68802 • P 308.382.1620 • F 308.384.1555 • StateFair.org

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Contact: Jace Robinson
Marketing Director
Nebraska State Fair
p) 308.382.1620 e) jrobinson@statefair.org

HE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE
Spotlight on Volunteer Ben Murphy at Nebraska State Fair

Grand Island, NE – Ben Murphy has been a volunteer at Nebraska State Fair since it moved to Grand Island eight years ago. He begins his role in early June every year as the assistant volunteer coordinator and works throughout the Fair into late August.

A 32-year veteran of the United States Navy, Murphy is in charge of placing volunteers into the computer system, ensuring volunteers are assigned positions where they are needed, and golf carts for transportation. Murphy implied that his favorite part of volunteering is working with a great group of people.

“These folks are the most trustworthy souls,” Murphy said. “The network is vast, but perhaps some of the magic is found in the ownership created in being part of something greater than yourself. The people make that happen.” Murphy alluded to the idea that even the volunteers create their own “brotherhood.”

Courtney Lierman, State Fair volunteer coordinator, said Murphy is the backbone of the volunteer program. “Of all the people to serve, Ben is always a familiar face during the Fair. He makes everyone comfortable around him and he’s a lot of fun. Everyone loves him,” Liermann said.

Volunteers are more often behind the scenes deeply involved in pre-Fair activities, such as planting flowers and preparing landscaping in early June. They sometimes work extreme hours to beat the heat, such as watering or building benches or other crowd-assistance measures. Murphy is saluted by his fellow compadres as being someone who truly has a passion for the Fair guest, making sure things are organized and ready for opening day.

Yet Murphy said that the volunteers are who inspire him to stay at it. "Once a person signs up to volunteer, they're hooked, and then they keep me hooked," said Murphy. "The experience is just so rewarding."

Persons interested in the volunteer program can go online to StateFair.org or visit the Grand Island Chamber. 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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