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Recycling efforts up during the 2018 Nebraska State Fair

J-Tech Solar Sustainability Pavilion, full of environmental education

Grand Island, NE – America Recycles Week is Nov. 12-18 and the Nebraska State Fair recycling efforts have increased this year. During the 11-day event 1,457 tons of waste and 1,150 gallons of used fryer oils were diverted from the local landfill. The onsite recycling programs, and partnerships with O’Neill Resources, Mid-Nebraska, and DAR PRO Solutions make this all possible.

“Guests, volunteers, exhibitors and staff are key to filling the nearly 400 recycling containers placed across the fairgrounds,” stated Jaime Parr, chief of sales for the Nebraska State Fair, “The recycling effort is measured by the dedication of everyone helping. The commercial vendors, and food and beverage concessionaires’ sort and break down their cardboard boxes and plastics. The recycling continues with them composting their food waste and recycling their fryer oils.”

Food composting nearly doubled from the previous year measurements. Plastics, cardboard, co-mingled (plastic, cardboard and aluminum) also had steady increase across categories. Volunteers can directly sign up to assist vendors with recycling, Parr explained, “volunteers flatten and remove the cardboard from the booth sites whenever possible. They ensure cardboard gets hauled into the appropriate recycling roll-off bins before guests arrive on opening day.”

The Nebraska State Fair produced 46 hours of interactive environmental education in the J-Tech Solar Sustainability Pavilion and 1,855 hours of interactive static exhibits. Environmental education was available from multiple partners. Parr

credits, the ongoing dialogue about recycling with having convenient containers near trash bins, and by providing environmentally friendly education and visual reminders to do the right thing.

The J-Tech Solar Sustainability Pavilion hosted 15 educational elements based on an environmental aspect. Educators shared their message about preserving the earth's natural resources or being better environmental stewards daily. "There is a real call to action for people to learn how they can make positive choices in their daily routine that impact our environment," stated Parr.

J-Tech Solar installed solar panels on the Nebraska Building in 2017. In 2018, we were able to monitor the energy production app and see the real time solar energy collections that these panels are allowing the fair year-round, continued Parr.

J-Tech also offers solar information, presentations, and exhibits within the Pavilion. For more information visit www.statefair.org

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