

October 2011



Olmsted County Fair News

Annual Meeting Reminder

Meeting notices were mailed on October 24th to all members of the Olmsted County Agricultural Association. If your membership was paid by the last day of the fair you should have received a notice. The meeting will be on **Wednesday, November 9, 2011** beginning at 8 pm. We will meet in the 4-H building on the Olmsted County Fairgrounds. The Fair Board will present a report of the 2011 Olmsted County Fair and plans for 2012. The election for board members to fill seven vacancies will be an important part of this meeting. We encourage you to attend.

Anniversaries in 2012

The year 2012 will be a time to remember two very important dates from our history.

It was August 19, 1912, when our current Olmsted County Agricultural Association was incorporated. The previous Ag Association had dissolved in the fall of 1900 when they sold the property they owned east of Third Avenue and south of Twelfth Street SE in Rochester. The fair continued under the sponsorship of the County Rural Schools until 1912 when the Ag Association was reborn.

The second anniversary we will commemorate in 2012 is 100 years of the Olmsted County Fair on the Graham property. It was September 11, 1912, that Dr. and Mrs. Graham signed the first leasing agreement with the Ag Association to use a portion of their property for the County Fair. The Grahams retained ownership and used the land and the buildings for their farming operation the rest of the year. They worked with the Ag Association to establish roadways and build the facilities needed for the fair. In 1919 the Grahams deeded the property to the county.

Graham Park Governance Structure

The Management Policy for the Olmsted County Fairgrounds was redefined by the Olmsted County Board at their meeting on October 11, 2011. They have re-established their long term interest in the property and agreed to maintain ownership and management. The exception will be the hockey arenas which continue to be managed according to the agreement the County has with the City of Rochester. The County Board will make the final decisions concerning any renovations or improvements at the fairgrounds but they have little or no money to contribute at this time. The County is interested in protecting the historic significance of the property and buildings.

Stakeholders are requested to provide information to the Park Superintendent and to seek outside resources to help fund projects. The Park Superintendent will then provide information to the County Parks Commission so they can make recommendations to the County Board for items and issues throughout the year.

Legacy Grant Funding

The Minnesota Legislature has made money available to County Fairs through the Department of Agriculture. The money is to come from the Legacy Amendment funds to enhance arts access and education and to preserve and promote Minnesota's history and cultural heritage. Our fair board is preparing grant applications for Legacy Fund money to be used on historic preservation projects and history displays on our fairgrounds. If received we will be fulfilling the County Board request to seek outside resources to help fund projects. Watch for more info as plans develop.

Editor – Barb Pagel

