

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEWS RELEASE

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State Fair Posts Increases for Fifth Consecutive Year

Huron, S.D. – The 126th Annual South Dakota State Fair continued a recent trend, with improved attendance and revenue increases for the fifth consecutive year.

Attendance for the 2011 State Fair came in at 191,158, an 8 percent increase from last year and up nearly 27 percent from 2007.

“We posted strong numbers in 2010. Our goal was to surpass those numbers in 2011. Our hard work paid off because increases were posted in major revenue areas like camping, carnival and admissions,” said State Fair Manager Jerome Hertel. “A run of good weather and a great staff also helped contribute to our success. It takes a lot of hard working and dedicated individuals to run the Fair and they should be proud of their efforts.”

Leading the increase in revenue was the Goldstar Amusements Carnival with a growth of 15 percent. State Fair sponsorships were up 8 percent. Gate revenue grew by slightly more than 6 percent. The total amount of campers on and off grounds grew by 7 percent. Camping revenue was up by 5 percent.

“Where we saw our growth in camping is from the people who stay a night or two in our off grounds camping area and pay the nightly fees. It’s a good feeling to see the campgrounds full every year because people are staying longer and taking advantage of all that we have to offer,” said Hertel.

Livestock events also saw a jump in participation. The number of people participating in livestock and horse events was up by 25%. The most significant increase was in performance events like the new Youth Rodeo Timed Event that was added this year. Some of the finest youth talent in South Dakota came to the State Fair to compete for thousands of dollars in prizes.

Another key area that posted significant increases was the commercial vending. Rent from commercial vendors was up 3 percent. Gross sales were up 11 percent compared to last year, while tax revenue grew more than 14 percent.

“Quite simply, we had a great State Fair this year,” said Walt Bones, South Dakota’s Secretary of Agriculture. “It’s clear that South Dakotans still love coming to the Fair.”

Next year’s South Dakota State Fair will take place August 30 through September 3. Preview day will be Wednesday, Aug. 29. For more information about year-round events taking place at the State Fair Park, visit www.sdstatefair.com, contact the Fair office in Huron at 800-529-0900 or follow the Fair on Facebook and Twitter.