

News from The Pickaway County Fair Speed Committee

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REFURBISHED GRANDSTAND NAMED IN HONOR OF LOCAL COUPLE

The first of many improvements planned for the Pickaway County fairgrounds has been completed and will be officially rededicated as part of the harness racing program to be held on Saturday, June 16. The newly-refurbished John and Jean Fissell Grandstand honors a husband and wife team who have provided service and support to the county for decades.

Along with their many other activities in the Circleville community, the Fissells were instrumental in the building of the fairgrounds grandstand in 1960, working with the Jaycees to organize and oversee several matinee race cards to raise the necessary funds. John served as the Race Secretary for the county fair harness racing meets for 45 years. Jean, too, worked behind the scenes at the races for many years. In addition to sharing their time and talent with the fairgrounds, they could always be counted on to contribute funds to ongoing projects.

It was in this spirit of community-mindedness, that Mr. Fissell donated what was to become one of the most eye-catching features of the fairgrounds—the 1917 steam locomotive known as the Sturm and Dillard 106. As President of the Sturm and Dillard Gravel Company, Fissell approached the Jaycees in 1976 offering the train engine which had worked at the Island Road quarry since 1920, but had been phased out in favor of more modern diesel engines.

Arrangements were made for the engine to be moved to the fairgrounds where it was placed on display alongside State Route 22.

The recent purchase of this steam locomotive by the Allentown and Auburn Railroad of Kutztown, Pennsylvania, provided the fair board with the additional funds necessary to give the grandstand a much-needed face lift. The grandstand's appearance is a preview of the new buildings planned for Phase 1 of the fairgrounds renovations to be begun immediately following the conclusion of this year's fair.

Although John Fissell passed away in 2010, Jean continues to actively support the fair and can be seen every year at the races, presenting the trophy for her sponsored race and visiting her many friends in the community. This year, she and her husband will also be recognized in a brief ceremony during the races, naming the grandstand in their honor.

Post time for Saturday's races is 1:00 PM. Admission is free and pari-mutuel wagering will be available. Harness racing will also take place at 1:00 PM on Sunday, and at 5:00 PM on Monday.