

Harvest Festival draws long-time spectators, participants

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Fran and Robert Parker's summer is complete now that they have attended the 39th Annual Sublimity Harvest Festival.

The Stayton couple, who has been to the festival 38 years in a row, plan on attending four events every summer including the Oregon State Fair. The Harvest Festival was the final event on the list.

"I don't think they (the founders) ever dreamed of something like this," Robert Parker said of how the festival has changed over the decades.

The festival, which started as a tractor pulling contest between local farmers in 1973, has grown to feature ATV, horse, tractor and truck pulls. It also offers live entertainment, a parade and monster trucks among other features.

"It's everything all rolled into one," said Noel Kuzma, harvest festival's truck pull committee chair and foundation board member.

Kuzma said the bottom line is having fun while helping the community. Proceeds from the event go toward charities such as the Stayton Food Bank, Boy Scouts and various school programs.



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Ralph Tramp, waits his turn to participate in the Pro-Modified Tractor Pull at the Sublimity Harvest Festival Saturday afternoon, Sept. 10, 2011. His 1950 GMC is called "Agent Orange".

In addition to ensuring things operate relatively smoothly, Kuzma was also able to have his navy blue 1972 Ford 460 country modified truck named "A Nightmare" entered into the truck pull.

The country modified trucks are the smaller class of trucks built in home or backyard shops.

Brent Dolby, also a member of the committee, drove "A Nightmare" for his first time on Thursday night. Dolby said he is a retired board member, but still helps with the event.

"I'm at a point where I can have fun and not have to put on the show," he said.

The event also draws veteran drivers year after year.

Ralph Tramp, of North Plains, has been driving his bright orange "Pullin' for the Vets" 1,200 horse power 1950 GMC in the professionally modified truck pull for 25 years.

"In the '80s they wanted a catchy name and a bright color," he said.

He said he continues to return to the event because of the spectators.

Meanwhile, spectators like the Parkers continue to attend and see how the festival evolves.

The couple, who are both on motorized wheelchairs, found a place to watch the truck pulls on the wheelchair deck constructed a few years back.

"It's a big improvement," Robert Parker said.