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TOP STORY

Amphitheater site project on track; 11,000 tickets sold for Camporee

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Heavy equipment parked in November 2022 at Cam-plex Park, as ground clearing for an amphitheater was underway at Cam-plex Park.

News Record Photo/Ed Glazar

The International Pathfinders Camporee is about 450 days away, and preparation for the estimated 60,000 people coming to town is continuing.

Monday afternoon, Cam-plex staff held a meeting with members of the Campbell County Fire Department and Campbell County Emergency Management to go over some of the work that's been going on.

More than 11,000 tickets have been sold for the event, according to Camporee's website.

People with Camporee will be on-site as early as July 10, 2024 to rehearse the nighttime programs. From July 29 through Aug. 4, several thousand people will be in town to set up the grounds.

The rest of the people will come in Aug. 5 and 6. This will be the biggest inconvenience, with tens of thousands of people coming in. Most of them will leave the night of the final program, so that shouldn't affect traffic as much.

The amphitheater site at Cam-plex Park is on track, said Cam-plex Executive Director Aaron Lyles. Dirt work is being done right now, and electrical and fiber infrastructure have already been installed at the site. Irrigation will be arriving later this month, and grass should be in place by June.

One thing that will have to be worked out is the "substantial tap fees," about \$70,000, that it will require, Lyles said.

Camporee is developing an plan for moving people in and out of Cam-plex. Lyles said they can move 9,000 people through a 42-foot gate in about eight minutes.

There are two options right now for road closures. One is shutting down Garner Lake Road for the entire week between Boxelder Road and Highway 51.

David King, emergency management coordinator for the county, said this is not ideal because it limits access for Fire Station 7, which is right off of Garner Lake Road, as well as the Arbuckle Lodge and High Plains campground.

The other option is a partial closure of Garner Lake Road between the fire station and the highway from 4 p.m. through 11 p.m. every day.

Vern Byrd, the operations director at the Center for Youth Evangelism for the International Pathfinders, estimated that 5,000 people will be staying off-site in the hotels and campgrounds.

Byrd said on the last two days of the event, some parents will buy day passes to watch their children get baptized.

When the event was in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, these parents would fly into Chicago and drive the few hours to watch the baptisms. Here in Gillette, “it’s a whole new ball game” because there are no large cities around, Byrd said, so “it’ll be interesting.”

Another issue that needs to be addressed is getting the community prepared for the event. Although Camporee and local officials have talked for two years now about this event, “we still have people that have no clue or they’re getting the wrong information wherever they are,” Byrd said.

“How is this going to work, how are we going to handle 60,000 people?” Lyles asked. “There needs to be a pretty steady cadence starting at the very end of the year all the way up to the event, exactly how this is going to look and feel to the people of the community.”

People can sign up for the International Pathfinders newsletter at camporee.org. Additionally, the Facebook pages for the Camporee and the Campbell County Convention and Visitors Bureau both host monthly Facebook live events for people to find out more information.

Cam-plex plans to hold more meetings like this one every month to keep stakeholders and the public in the loop.

Jonathan Gallardo