

Fall Festival a Resounding Success

With a sunny 73-degree high and a cloudless blue sky, the Lake Mills Area Chamber of Commerce's Fall Festival of Color drew a humongous crowd to Commons Park on Sunday.

The festival kicked off at 9:00 a.m. with Borderlands band playing a two-hour set of upbeat folk music including favorites by Johnny Cash and the Scottish band, The Waterboys. "The band really captures the spirit of the day," one festival attendee commented.

With 125 vendors, the craft show component of the day was quite prominent in this, the tenth Fall Festival of Color. People patronized booths containing everything from handmade bags and bowls to dog treats. "We look forward to the Fall Festival every year for its autumnal gifts and decorations," downtown resident Karen Goeschko commented.

Just as popular were the seasonal and produce items. A vast array of pumpkins, colorful gourds and squash were sprinkled throughout the park. A well-known vendor from Lake Mills' Wednesday night Farmer's Market offered homegrown meats and organic milk.

The Lake Mills EMS was on-hand all day to demonstrate their new hydraulic bed lift. Able to lift up to 700 pounds at a time, the lift has proven to be a back-saver for its staff.

The lively students of Todd Anderson's Lake Mills Martial Arts Center took the stage by storm at 11:15 a.m., demonstrating roundhouse kicks, blocks, and the culture of karate. At 11:45 a.m., instructor Lisa Quade led her enthusiastic Lake Mills Junior Jazzercise students in a set of fun and action-packed dance routines.

The younger children had several activities to choose from this year. The Re/Max bouncy house opened an hour early and was packed with kids of all ages until 3 p.m. Whitewater's Brian Getzoff and his "Hot Top Ranch" horsedrawn wagon rides were a big hit from morning to afternoon.

Another attraction for the children was the first ever Fall Festival story time, sponsored by the L.D. Fargo Public Library. Atop a colorful quilt, two staff members took turns reading various books, including "Clifford's First Autumn" to a group of ten captivated youngsters. Listening to the reading and observing the children, local resident Janice Rehm noted, "This is excellent; it gives the children something to look forward to!"

The Lake Mills Optimist Club's pumpkin decorating contest and giveaway drew a crowd of over 300 children. Under the leadership of member Jill Kloss, the Optimists picked 500 pumpkins and 300 watermelons, a donation by local residents, Aaron and Lois Johnson. Long-time Optimist member, Dave Wendt said of the event, "This is one of our better projects of the year. Our tables were filled all day!" Door prizes and awards were given throughout the day, with nine year-old Savannah Forbeck of Lake Mills winning the "Smiley Face" pumpkin contest with her well-crafted black magic marker design.

At 1:00 p.m., Borderlands rounded out the end of the afternoon with a second set of song, accompanied once again by guitar, fiddle, and mandolin. "Our biggest crowd was from 1 to 2 p.m." band leader and Cambridge resident Kurt Griesemer commented, "We had a fantastic time!"

With eight vendors selling food from the center of the park, no one went hungry. Local vendors included: the Jefferson County Viet Nam Veterans of America, Blackhawk Chapter #409 selling barbequed pork and brats, the Lake Mills Moravian Church selling their infamous chili, Tryanena Ladies Club selling caramel apples, cookies and cocoa, the Lake Mills Music Parents Organization with hot dogs, brats and nachos, the Lake Mills United Methodist Women selling their divine pies (with all proceeds going to the Lake Mills Food Pantry), TT's Time Out selling tacos and nachos (with proceeds going to Lake Mills' Relay for Life), and newcomer St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Newville with grilled chicken breast sandwiches, grilled cheese, apple cider, and baked goods. By 1:15 p.m., the Lake Mills Lioness Club had sold out of their signature walking tacos. "We sold out at noon last year with 20 pounds of meat, so we added ten more this year" said volunteer, Cheryl Wersland. "I think we'll add even more for 2007." Like many of the other vendors, they'll be back again next year!