

## Hopes to increase participation

# Fair may undergo change

by Mattie Glasson  
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**HURRICANE** - The 1983 Washington County Fair may be the last under the present format to be held in Hurricane.

County Commissioner John Whitney said that this is not an arbitrary decision of the county commissioners or the Fair board. It is a considered possibility to ease tensions which have developed among certain factions, and increase greater area participation, he explained.

Washington county currently has budgeted \$32,000 for the fair and is not planning to withdraw support, he said, adding that consideration is being given to dividing portions of the Fair between St. George area and Hurricane.

A spring fair, largely animal oriented, could be held in St. George in conjunction with the Dixie Downs race meet, Whitney suggested. This fair could include horse and livestock shows, and events could be planned for 4-H club participation.

In August, the fruit and agricultural fair could be held in Hurricane, with a theme on the order of the former "Peach Days", forerunner of the present fair.

Recalled 'Peach Days'

Whitney recalled the "Peach Days"

when local residents were largely responsible for their own show and planned their own activities. He said it was his opinion that there has been lack of local support to the county fair because residents have been "turned off" by commercialism.

Whitney expressed his regret for the controversy existing between the Washington County Fair Board and the Hurricane American Legion Post. He recommended that Hurricane city officials, Hurricane Valley chamber of commerce, and other community clubs and leading citizens hold a series of meetings and resolve the issue.

The American Legion arena, Whitney said, is the ideal site to hold boxing matches, a popular feature of the Fair.

Offered \$600 a night

This spring, Whitney said, the commissioners submitted a contract to the Legion, Robert Langston, Commander, offering \$600 per night for use of the arena. The only obligation the Legion would have would be provide the site. The boxing card, promotion, referees, equipment, insurance and ticket sales would be provided by the county.

The contract was returned, unsigned, Whitney said, with the notation that the Legion would pay \$25, just as any other concessionaire, and would put on its own fights. This arrangement was not acceptable to the county, Whitney said, since

crowds are attracted here by the Fair. The Legion, he said, has no promotion experience, and owns no equipment.

Money-making attraction

Boxing, Whitney agreed, has been a money-making portion of the fair. He understands the desire on the part of certain Legionnaires to capitalize on the matches, but contends that the county has been more than generous throughout the years in support of the American Legion arena.

Until two years ago when "battle lines" were drawn by individuals, the county annually paid the Legion from \$2000 to \$2500 for use of the facility. The past two years the "compromise" last-minute rental has been only \$1000 to \$1200, he noted.

Change in the fair format, or dividing the fair into two sections, has not "been cast in concrete", Whitney stressed. It is an alternative being seriously considered, and he expressed the hope that people of eastern Washington county would aggressively consider what they want, and what they would support.

The commissioners have recently met with Hurricane city officials explaining the suggested division. A meeting is slated for the near future with Hurricane valley chamber of commerce, and strong local input is urged, Whitney said. Notice of this meeting will be widely circulated, chamber officials said.