

Co. News Editorial

Yes, Fair has been asked to move

Because of some questions raised about an item in our editorial on the County Fair in last Friday's paper, we will take this space today to clarify. The editorial said that "the school board asked that the fair be moved from Hurricane High School not later than the school year of 1988."

This statement has been challenged by some readers; however, we have contacted school officials and obtained copies of documents that indicate an agreement has been in place since early 1984 that the fair could use Hurricane High School facilities only through the 1988 fair.

The motion on usage of school district facilities for the fair was passed in an April 10, 1984 school board meeting. A letter from Supt. Steven Peterson to the county commissioners dated Oct. 15, 1984, restates the school board decision. It says, "...the board indicated that the County Commission would have access to Hurricane High School facilities over the next five year period of time. One year of this five has passed with the August, 1984 county fair. Therefore, four years remain."

Peterson and school district business manager Ron McArthur said they know of no intervening agreement that has changed the deadline for relocation of the fair. A survey taken early this year on the attitudes of personnel at Hurricane High School toward the fair may have been misconstrued, Peterson said. The conclusions and recommendations from that survey to try to reduce the impact of the fair on school facilities were to make the arrangement more tolerable during the next three years, but not to extend the use of the school beyond 1988, he said.

School Board President Sheldon Johnson confirmed that it is still the school board's position that the fair cannot continue to use the high school over the long term. "We've been trying to get them out for a long time," he said. "The district feels the school cannot be the permanent place. It ruins the grounds and buildings for school." Johnson cited wear on the lawns as well as the floors of both the gym and the hallways. "There's more wear in one week than in the whole school year," he said. "The lawns never come back."

The Washington County News has not taken a position on the County Fair issue but we believe the decision should be made in an atmosphere of objectivity with all the facts on the table.