

TOP STORY: **MARIN ATTRACTION WRAPS UP**

FAIR'S 'BIGGEST NIGHT EVER'

Motown greats draw overflow crowds Monday, boosting five-day attendance in weak economy



Photos special to the IJ/Jean-Paul Horré

From left, Rosa Fernandez, Jayme Hobbs and Ariana Yogues break down an ice cream stand on Tuesday at the Marin County Fairgrounds, the day after The Temptations and the Four Tops put on the last concerts of the five-day Marin County Fair. Officials said the groups outdrew Huey Lewis and the News's massive 2005 performance.

By Nels Johnson
Marin Independent Journal

THE TEMPTATIONS and the Four Tops packed them in as the 2010 Marin County Fair ended with what fair chief Jim Farley called the biggest crowd ever to attend a fair concert.

Although the fair wasn't a record-breaker in other categories, it came close despite the sputtering economy, said Farley, the county executive who has produced the fair for the past 21 years.

The concert venue on the fairgrounds island was closed after filling to capacity at 5 p.m. Monday, more than an hour before the Four Tops took the stage, and an overflow crowd spilled out



Tiffany Smith (left) and Meco Gammage of the North Bay Conservation Corps load recycle bin onto a truck on Tuesday as they clean up at the Marin County Fairgrounds in San Rafael.

the walkway to listen to the music from lawn areas nearby. Farley said that although no count was possible, thousands showed up to listen in.

"I couldn't believe the num-

ber of people who were there," Farley said, elated that the annual festivities proceeded smoothly, capped by the soulful double bill he said was a

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FAIR: Despite economy, event draws big crowds, big money

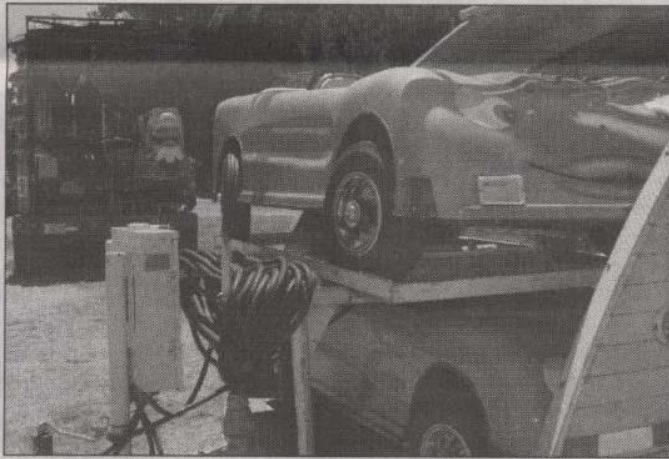
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bigger draw than Huey Lewis and the News, which wowed an overflow crowd in 2005. He said he has no doubt it was the fair's "biggest night ever," attracting the largest crowd of any fair concert.

Farley, in the thick of the concert throng, got in the spirit as he called his wife, Danielle, who was at home baby-sitting, and held up the phone as the Temptations sang their 1965 Motown hit, "My Girl."

The fair over five days attracted 114,000 people, about the same as last year, but down about 6,000 from the five-day attendance during the booming economy of 2005 and 2006.

Paid attendance this year was 84,233, about 700 fewer than last year and 3,000 fewer than in 2005. Admission revenue totaled \$1,187,297, up from last year's \$1,124,290, but down about \$22,000 from a record gate in 2008. Farley noted admission prices



Special to the IJ/Jean-Paul Horré

Rides are stacked up and packed away, ready for their next destination Tuesday, a day after the five-day Marin County Fair came to an end.

were boosted to \$15 this year.

Other fair economic statistics indicated this year's event came close to toppling other milestones achieved during the "greenest county fair on earth" in 2008, which generated widespread publicity and interest while winning numerous awards.

Parking revenue totaled \$104,262, up from \$98,538 last year, but less than the

\$107,196 pulled in at the 2008 event. Food and beverage sales amounted to \$999,875, up from \$972,770 last year but down from a record \$1,038,703 in 2008. Sales of 81 works of fine art, crafts and photos totaled \$24,642, up from 73 works that sold for \$19,740 last year, but less than the 70 works that sold for a record \$24,746 in 2008.

"Given the economy, I am just thrilled," Farley said.

A host of other statistics also helped paint a portrait of the 2010 fair, ranging from the 575 families who visited the event's "baby sanctuary" and 2,411 fairgoers who presented Independent Journal discount coupons on kids' day, to 5,050 sunscreen packets and 2,500 pedometers issued at the Play Fair tent, where officials reported that participants who returned about 1,875 of the devices logged a total of about 8,576,000 steps around the fairgrounds. In addition, 196 children learning about beans, bees, composting and worms on opening day were among 8,292 visitors to the Marin Master Gardeners' exhibit.

Farley said planning for next year's fair began last month, and noted the event will be ahead of the curve. The 2011 fair will salute the 75th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge, which occurs in 2012.

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