

For Immediate Release

12th Annual John Arcand Fiddle Fest ends on a HIGH NOTE!

Saskatoon, August 14, 2009 – rain showers Thursday morning, and again Friday morning, may have deterred a few of the workshop attendees, and affected the number of weekend campers that “usually” arrive on Friday, but overall, it certainly didn’t hamper the record attendance, and positive atmosphere of celebration.

Even with the damp start, the attendance numbers were up reaching an all time high of an estimated 4900, and although the workshop participant numbers were down marginally, they were still well attended and surveys are filled with cries of more, more, more, so the need to increase the workshops was once again emphasized.

Organizers are baffled by the early arrivals this year, with the un-serviced camping in the hayfield already becoming a temporary village by the Tuesday prior to the Fest. And, while the usual stream of RV’s did not arrive on Friday due to rain, the early arrivals made it just over the total number from last year at an estimated 180 units camped on site.

What was noticeably increased this year was the “day” attendance, which is punctuating the success of organizers work to make more “local” folks aware of this amazing cultural happening that is in their backyard.

The evening concerts were extremely well attended, and the increase in the attendance at both of the old time dances are definitely warranting a much bigger dance floor.

The Festival’s highlight has typically been the Saturday Night “John Arcand and Special Friends” concert; which pairs the fiddle instructors with a young protégé, demonstrating the power of mentorship and emphasizes the impact of this festival to promote and preserve the cultural traditions of fiddle, music and dance by passing them on to the younger generations. This was again a success, however, this year organizers also planned the Thursday evening concert around the same top fiddle players (who all act as fiddle workshop instructors) and that was the most incredible spectacle of fiddling that has been seen in some time and they are now both considered major highlights and next year will follow the same format.

46 fiddlers and 27 jiggers competed for the \$10,700.00 worth of the prize money and provided the audience with great entertainment as well.

The Festival has been running a capital campaign for the past three years to build a “permanent roof” to replace the use of the large tent for the main stage venue. 50/50 draws and a raffle for a Co-op gift certificate were included in the weekend festivities and brought them closer to their goal, which this year was demonstrated on colorful sign indicating the need for just \$40,000.00 more to build next spring. This and the absolute joy of the weekend also ensued some very generous personal donations. Fundraising initiatives will be carried through this fall and winter and hopefully success in achieving the goal will be realized by early spring and the building will be up for next year’s festival.

For more information please contact the Festival’s Director, Vicki Arcand at 306.382.0111 or windy.acres@sasktel.net.

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