

Shawn O'Dell

The 2014 Otsego County Fair is dedicated to Shawn O'Dell

The Otsego County Fair is very proud to recognize Shawn O'Dell as a key volunteer for thirty plus years in our organization. Shawn was featured in the Spirit of Volunteerism section of the Gaylord Herald Times on April 29.

Congratulations, Shawn!

Shawn is the son of Don & Mary O'Dell and was raised in Gaylord. Shawn, his wife Jennifer and daughter Ariel live in Gaylord.



As a child, Shawn's parents got him involved in 4-H gardening. He joined Ed & Frances Burzynski's 4-H Club, which led to raising and showing vegetables, showing small animals (rabbits and chickens) and a calf at the Fair.

Shawn was encouraged to volunteer at the fair after high school by his Uncle, Mike Townsend, who was on the Fair Board. He moved to Cheboygan for a couple of years and volunteered at the Cheboygan County Fair helping get the fair up and running there, but always returned home to volunteer at the Otsego County Fair.

When asked to help with this write up Ray & Judy Kucharek said we met Shawn when he was in 4-H and later as a young man when he joined the Fair Board and eagerly helped wherever he could. Eventually, he took over the Demolition Derby and made that event a huge success. Shawn willingly visited a lot of Northern Michigan Fair's with Ray to check out what they were doing and how they were doing it. He brought back young new ideas with him. Shawn was always a go-getter and got things done at the fairgrounds and during Fair week. Like other members, his family came and helped too.

Shawn has taken on many different roles and assisted the Fair in many ways. He has served as president, vice president, director, volunteer, he got the chili & rib cook-off started, off-season storage committee, outdoor vendor chairman, Relay for Life chairman, member of the finance committee and many more roles and duties too numerous to mention. With Shawn's many years of knowledge, he is definitely our (fair board members) go to guy.

With his knowledge of sound equipment, this has made him the chairman of the sound system for many years. The Fairgrounds has many areas that utilize sound; grandstand events, entertainment stage, youth livestock auction and the horse area, which makes this job a very important one. His main project this year will be installing a sound system that will broadcast throughout the entire grounds for announcements.

This is Shawn's fourth year as Director on the MAFE (Michigan Association of Fairs & Exhibitions) Board. Shawn is serving as the Zone 5 Director. Zone 5 consists of fourteen County Fairs (Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Cheboygan, Emmet-Charlevoix, Iosco, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Northern District ~ Cadillac, Northwestern Michigan ~ Traverse City, Ogemaw, Otsego and Presque Isle). Shawn and his family try to visit as many of these County Fairs as possible throughout the Fair season and other Fairs, if he has time.

Shawn and his family make it to almost all of the work bees, which occur weekly from May through September. You can find Shawn showing up early and getting the grill going and cooking whatever it may be for everyone at the work bee.

Shawn and his family are a huge part of our "Fair Family". The Otsego County Fair Board of Directors and the Associate Members would like to "**THANK YOU, SHAWN**" for your dedication to the Otsego County Fair. We would also like to "THANK" Shawn's wife Jen and daughter Ariel for their support and for lending him to his "Fair Family."