

Gary Gehringer, Sr.

The 2013 Otsego County Fair is dedicated to Gary Gehringer

At the 128th Annual MAFE Convention, held in Grand Rapids this past January, Gary was presented with a plaque honoring him with the "Zone 5 Volunteer Award". Zone 5 is comprised of twenty one counties. Gary is the Otsego County Fair's Volunteer of the Year.

Congratulations, Gary!

Gary and his wife Rebecca live in Gaylord. Gary has two children Cindy and Gary Jr. and Rebecca has one son David that Gary raised. They have three grandkids Lilly, Logan and Lelan. Gary and Rebecca have four ferrets Buddy, Winston, Taz and Millie.

Prior to Gary joining the Fair he was a member of the Otsego County Mounted Division providing security to the Fair during Fair week. He acted as the liaison between the Mounted Division and the Fair board. Gary has always volunteered somewhere in the community. He was on Fire & EMS for 20 years.

Gary became a Fair board member when there was a vacancy due to a resignation in June 2011 and then at the annual meeting in November 2011 he was voted back on the board as a board member. He is the first to volunteer for all kinds of activities from cleaning bathrooms to cutting grass and weed whipping, to making sure we had enough fire extinguishers and hanging them around the fairgrounds. Gary assisted with mending the fence line, finding and repairing openings where people were sneaking in. He hung new windows in the stage, was in charge of security for Fair week, replaced boards on picnic tables, power washed floors, helped clean up every area of the fairgrounds that need it. Gary also maintained the lawn mowers, office, campgrounds and grandstand bathrooms.

Gary has been working on a project, since last summer. That project is cutting the trees down that are growing through the fence and trimming the limbs that are being supported by the fence around the outside fence line of the fairgrounds. He contacted the businesses that owned the property around the fairgrounds, to make sure the Fair had their permission to cut the trees down or trim them. Gary received the permission we needed. Time just got away and the project did not get completed. This project is on the top of Gary's list of things to get done first thing in the spring.

Gary did all the leg work for getting new bleachers. He made calls for quotes from bleacher companies and brought the information to the Fair board. The board decided to order 50 feet of new bleachers, which was two 25 foot sections. As the Chair, Gary ordered the bleachers; he scheduled and met with the delivery truck to unload the bleachers. Gary spent hours with the instructions on the phone as necessary with the company that provided the bleachers, especially when it was discovered they had sent the wrong parts to put them together. This was a huge project that Gary took on, a project like nothing he had ever done before. Gary spent countless hours in the hot summer sun, some days from early morning till dark and even in the rain putting the bleachers together with only a little help from his wife Rebecca. He did get the bleachers done before Fair. These bleachers provide us with around 360 more seats for our grandstand events.

Rarely was there a work bee that Gary did not show up for and if he was unable to come to the work bees he would spend hours another day of the week to get things done.

During fair week Gary was on the grounds all week. We carry walkie talkies during Fair week and if someone called for help, he was answering just about every call and volunteering to help anywhere and everywhere no matter what the job called for. Gary has always been pleasant and helpful to anyone who needed assistance, from other fair board members to visitors, exhibitors and sponsors alike. He is always ready to do what needs to be done.

Gary is a big part of our Fair Family. The Otsego County Fair Board of Directors and the Associate Members would like to **"THANK YOU GARY"** for your countless hours of volunteering at the Otsego County Fair.

