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Liberal Participates In Kansas Sampler

More than 8,500 people attended the 21st annual Kansas Sampler Festival held May 1-2 in Leavenworth despite a brief rain and hail storm on Sunday afternoon. More than 320 exhibitors, entertainers, historic performers, food vendors, entrepreneurs, vintners, microbrewers, artists and authors provided the public a sample of what there is to see, do, hear, taste, drink, and buy throughout Kansas.

Sixteen giant tents were filled with participants from every corner of the state including Liberal, Goodland, Columbus, Medicine Lodge, Scandia, Muscotah and 140 other communities. New to the festival were large tents dedicated to the promotion of Kansas authors, artists, Freedom's Frontier National Heritage area, Leavenworth County and Pottawatomi County. A Kansas wine and beer garden also had a successful debut.

Liberal's booth was located in the Wild West Country tent along with Dodge City, Garden City, Cimarron National Grasslands, Meade County, Syracuse, Edwards County, Ness County and Grant County. Along with handing out information about Liberal and its attractions, the Liberal Convention and Vistiors Bureau staff cooked International Pancake Day silver dollar pancakes for festival attendees to try.

They also participated in "The Stump," a question and answer session where people have a chance to win prizes by answering questions about Kansas. The Liberal giveaway basket included a grill, cooking utensils and other items needed to make a Pancake breakfast along with Pancake Day merchandise and a cerfiicate for free tickets to Pancake Day events. The basket was sponsored by Bears and Hares Mercantile, International Pancake Day and the Liberal CVB.

Foundation director Marci Penner said, "The large crowd drew rave reviews from exhibitors as being a very interested audience. The intent of the festival is to increase year-round visitation and business for the exhibitors."

A project of the Inman-based Kansas Sampler Foundation, the festival was hosted by Leavenworth County. Keyta Kelly, Tonganoxie, served as the festival director. Leavenworth Main Street hosted a downtown welcome party on Friday night. The festival will be held again in Leavenworth May 7-8, 2011.

Liberal is one of three communities vying for the privilege of hosting the festival in 2012 and 2013. It is always held the first weekend in May and moves every third year to a new location.

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