

O'fest awards close to \$80K

Excess revenue dealt to 59 area nonprofits

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Mount Angel Oktoberfest distributed \$78,380 in excess revenue to 59 local nonprofit organizations on Monday evening at the Evergreen Golf Course in Mount Angel.

These funds come from 2005's Oktoberfest. After all the bills are paid, said Oktoberfest Public Relations Director Jerry Lauzon, the organization puts aside enough money to start up the next year's festival, and invests in infrastructure improvements, like a new harvest monument, Bavarian-looking ATM kiosks, wine-garden bars and other property improvements. The rest of the money – the excess revenue – is shared with nonprofits in the region.

The annual festivities took place at Evergreen Golf Course Restaurant, and approximately 140 people involved with Oktoberfest and the honored organizations were present.

“Everyone was invited to come and accept their check and say a few words,” said Lauzon. “We had a lot of people come, and we were still able to finish in a little over an hour. They each got three well-chosen sentences.”

“There were so many human-interest stories,” he said, “from the somewhat funny to the really profound type. It was great fun, just wonderful.”

Organizations that received monies included the Benedictine Foundation of Oregon (\$1,250), the Mount Angel Community Foundation (\$7,000), the Silverton Hospital Foundation (\$5,250) and Saint Mary Parish (\$3,375).

“We're very pleased,” said Saint Mary Parish's pastor the Rev. Philip Waibel.

Waibel was present on Monday evening, representing his parish.

The money that Mount Angel's Saint Mary Parish received will go toward replacing the carpet in the 1912-built church. During the annual Oktoberfest, the church plays host to various concerts, providing a beautiful venue for visitors.

“The carpet has been down for over 15 years,” Waibel said, “and even if 10 percent of the Oktoberfest visitors came into the church, that would be 30,000 people.”

While the \$3,375 in funds the parish received will only cover approximately a quarter of the carpet expenses, Waibel still thanks the Oktoberfest organization for its contribution. Saint Mary Parish has also received money in the past, with funds going toward “a

variety of things around the parish,” Waibel said, like chimes for the parish’s organ and gates at the cemetery.

“The event was beautiful,” Waibel said of Monday evening.

And both Waibel and Lauzon agree that one of the most touching stories at Monday’s Giveaway came from HORSES for the Physically Challenged, a Mount Angel organization that provides horseback-riding lessons for people of all ages with physical limitations.

According to the organization’s Web site, www.open.org/horses88, physical therapists use horses to “promote positive-movement challenges.” Classes help those with physical limitations with sensory-motor skills, cognitive skills and sensory integration, among other benefits.

HORSES for the Physically Challenged received \$500 on Monday evening.

Last year, the Oktoberfest organization was able to give away much less than this year’s impressive \$78,380 — approximately \$28,000 — due mostly to the rainy festival.

“Everyone applies for money,” said Lauzon.

After organizations apply, the Oktoberfest Executive Board goes through its “first grub,” in which applications are reviewed. The Board then makes its “first mark on the wall,” approximating how much money can be given away, Lauzon said. After the first proposals, the Oktoberfest holds a full board meeting, when the board’s 19 members vote on each organization.

“Our organizations are all in the area,” said Lauzon. “There are a few from Portland, Hillsboro, Clackamas and Sandy, but they were all involved with the festival.”

All “Explorers” and “Cadets” organizations are part of the Boy Scouts of America, who volunteer during Oktoberfest to aid with crosswalks, crowd control and patrolling parking lots.

“It’s called, ‘taking care of our obligations,’” said Lauzon. “We make a donation to the volunteer organization, based on what they worked at the festival.”

Lauzon hopes that this year’s Oktoberfest continues to raise funds for local organizations.

“We hope to do as well, if not better,” said Lauzon. “We’re hoping for the best.”

“No other festival [distributes funds] the way we do,” he said. “We give out money to all sorts of people, instead of just one organization. Mount Angel’s Oktoberfest is in its 41st year, and we’ve been able to give away \$1.75 million since we began distributing excess revenue 38 years ago.”