

DPS BOOTH WINS MOST IMPROVED AT FAIR

BY BETH IPSEN, PIO

When tackling the Department of Public Safety booth at the 2007 Alaska State Fair in Palmer, those involved wanted to change as many things as possible from what has existed for the past 20 years.

The hard work and change paid off as the booth garnered the Most Improved Award.

The award came from a variety of improvements to the booth.

Jaime Kirkmeyer, a public safety technician with AWT in Palmer, replaced the crumbling deck with one that many eyed for their own back yard.

Workers Lt. Barry Wilson, Capt. Hans Brinke, Information Officer Megan Peters and Peters' friend, Anne Johnson, and I worked a few days in the sun painting the outside of the booth trooper colors starry night (light blue) with a trim of phantom blue (dark blue), golden sun (yellow) and flaming sword (red). I should mention we also did a little practice painting on each other once in a while. The red stripe down the seat of Peters' jeans took a week's worth of washing to fade.

The idea to paint the trim to resemble the trooper blue pants with the yellow and red stripes came from a combination of both Wilson's and Brinke's minds.

Peters and I picked the colors, despite Peters' hesitation with using a color called "flaming sword."

Other improved changes were a newer, nicer backdrop to the recruitment display and a bold sign that replaced the old wooden sign affixed to the front of the booth.

The sign, matched with a pair of large DPS/AST patch signs,

gave the booth a new eye-catching look.

The biggest attractor – and a change that rivaled the new paint job – was the addition of the Cadillac Escalade in front of the booth.

This recruitment tool got a lot of attention, especially when the sound system rattled a neighboring pottery booth.

Justin Freeman of the Public Information Office did the dynamic designing for the logos printed on T-shirts for those working the booth.

AWT B Detachment Commander Lt. Troy Oleck and his Administrative Clerk Audrey Ayay-Dehart donated some "dead things" to display at the booth, including Mr. Mink, who many booth workers used to try to coax a smile out of children while taking their photos.

I want to especially thank all the people who signed up to work the booth. You made my job of doing some of the coordinating for the booth easier, especially when I heard few complaints, but rather got many positive responses from people because working the fair is actually enjoyable.

I found this out personally by working four nights making and handing out the Safety Bear Club Cards to fairgoers, many of whom flock to the booth every year for the cards.

Director of Administrative Services Dan Spencer signed up for a shift with me while in Anchorage from Juneau for a series of budget meetings.

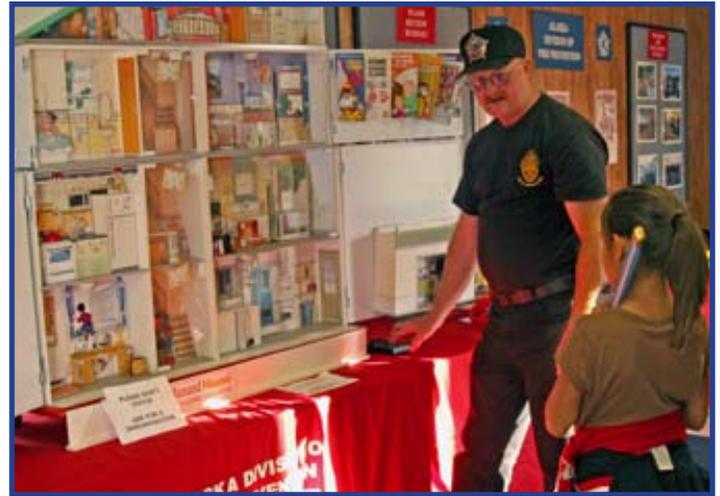
However, if it weren't for the efforts of Mahlon Greene, who works in public education for the newly named Division of Fire and Life Safety, I don't believe the booth would have functioned. Greene worked tirelessly and



Fairgoers stop to talk or check out the Cadillac Escalade, a new edition to the improved Department of Public Safety fair booth.



Anne Johnson, Lt. Barry Wilson and PIO Megan Peters spend a sunny Friday painting the DPS fair booth before the start of the Stat Fair.



Mahlon Greene, who works in public education for the newly named Division of Fire and Life Safety, teaches a young fairgoer about fire safety.

was a constant fixture at the booth, even sleeping in his RV parked in back on the weekends. He did this with a smile on his face even after spending days prior to the fair opening putting on fire prevention classes to other vendors.

Jennifer Gordon, from recruitment, was also a regular face at the booth throughout the fair.

Village Public Safety Officers Mike Nemeth (Nelson Lagoon), Charlie Hartzell (Angoon), George “Skip” Robinson (Tanana) and Sgt. Roy Jones Jr. (Larson Bay) took turns providing an invaluable presence at the booth while promoting the VPSO program. Court Services Officer Julie-Dee Sharkey led the CSOs’ charge to help out the uniformed presence. Rather than spending the day at the headquarters office, many uniformed troopers spent the day mingling among fairgoers in front of the booth.

I thank you all for stepping forward to help make the fair this year a success. Even the weather cooperated.

There were some glitches throughout the fair, such as security delaying uniformed troopers on their way in to work the booth, and computer blips when the booth got busy. Hopefully, those will be smoothed out by next year.

Despite the most improved award, those of us who diligently worked on the preparation for the booth are not going to sit on our laurels and will put our heads together to further improve the booth before next year.

Anyone with suggestions can contact me at my office at 269-5656 or email at Elizabeth.ipsen@alaska.gov.



Safety Bear, aka Soldotna Radio Dispatcher Stacey Day, takes a minute to visit with her children, Aubree, left, and Paige, who were attending the State Fair on Kids Day, Aug. 24.



Lt. Jeff Laughlin, left, and Lt. Barry Wilson, hold up signs for inspection while putting on the finishing touches to the booth before the start of the State Fair in Palmer.