

In 2009, the Tollesboro Lions Club made the largest investment in our fairgrounds ever. First organized in 1954, and always a small club with regards to the number of members, we are fortunate to have members who are passionate about the community in which we live. Organized in 1954, our charter members had the foresight, drive, will, and determination to organize the Tollesboro Lions Club Fair in 1957, originally as a one day event conducted on the grounds of the Tollesboro High School. We have come a long way since 1960, when the club purchased 8 acres which is now a part of our current fairgrounds, and which has been expanded over the years to include over 20 acres, and our small one day Fair has been expanded to where it has been operating as a 9 day event for the last several years!

Although we had been spending thousands of dollars each year in park and fairgrounds improvements (new structures, additional bleachers and seating, etc.), in June and July of last year we made the largest "at one time" investment in our grounds ever. We were fortunate to be a recipient of a Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant (a "match" grant up to \$75,000). Using this grant as a catalyst, we proceeded to make over \$185,000 in park improvements in time for the 2009 Tollesboro Lions Club Fair (this figure is the amount of money spent in actual dollars on our grounds and this figure excludes the value of donated labor, materials, and equipment, as well as the value of any discounted labor, materials, and equipment, as well as the value of our members' own labor, all of which --- if included --- likely would have made the total investment in our grounds in 2009 exceed \$225,000)!!! With this grant and our own commitment to our fairgrounds, we have added additional bleachers (additional seating for 620 persons!), a new permanent 12 fixture restroom facility, enlarged and improved the horse ring, added a new shelter pavillion, made upgrades to our lighting/electrical/plumbing services, have enlarged our tractor/truck pull/ATV racing track for improved safety (including a new, longer, safer track), and have placed signage (including a large lighted sign along the "AA" Highway) on the property. We are also committed our club to a long term lease of an adjacent approximate 3.4 acre parcel of land that will extend our grounds to the "AA" Hwy., increasing our grounds and adding additional parking areas! In 2010, we were the recipient of an additional grant in the amount of \$40,000 (to which we had to make a 25 percent match, for a total project size of \$50,000) and we used this grant in order to purchase and construct additional permanent bleacher seating (actually spending nearly \$60,000 in the process including donated labor and materials!). And we have continued to make improvements to the grounds each successive year. Be sure to check out our fairgrounds to see the vast improvements we have made! We did have to mortgage our grounds to make it work, but hopefully all will be for the best. We are fortunate to have such good community backing; we could not have accomplished this otherwise, especially considering the small size of our club (only about 25 members). We also owe a debt of gratitude to Lewis County Judge Steve Applegate (who considered and originally offered to split the grant funds between our community and Garrison when the county was unable to make use of it; Garrison chose not to use the funds due to the match requirement. I must admit that at first there were members of our club that were a little reluctant to use the whole amount due to the match requirement. But luckily we had an overwhelming majority with foresight, will, and determination who wanted to take advantage of this opportunity and the results are what you see today!) and to Jailer Tim Underwood (for bringing the prisoners to our grounds to help maintain them), the staff of Buffalo Trace Area Development District (who originated the grant for the County and then assisted with our use of the funds when the county's proposed project fell through), Carmeuse Lime (which donated most of the gravel that we utilized on our grounds), Lykins Enterprises (donated the posts for the sign on the "AA" Hwy.), Kenny Meadows (built the new speed pull track and used his equipment for unloading the large concrete berms), Glen Cole, the Fleming Mason Energy (set the poles for the new lights) and several of their employees, Brown County Construction, Rip's Farm Center, and many other persons from our community, in addition to our own club members.

Having made this huge financial commitment to our Fairgrounds, we held an increasing number of events throughout the year at our facilities, and will continue to hold monthly events throughout the summer months for the foreseeable future. We also conducted our first ever "Ol' Fashioned Court Days" event last year, which will be included this year and hopefully will be expanded and a success.

OTHER: About 1995, our Club purchased the Tollesboro High School property and which we donated the use of these facilities to be utilized as a Christian School and also to a local Food Pantry. We sold the Tollesboro High School facilities to the Tollesboro Christian School in 2008 --- for less than we paid for the facilities ---- so that they might apply for grants for expanding their enrollment and operations (after the Christian School closed in 2012, the former Tollesboro High School was purchased by a member of the Tollesboro Lions Club who is making commercial use of portions of the property and still permits the local Food Pantry to operate on the grounds free of charge).

We acquired a baseball pitching machine which we permit to be used by local teams at no cost for batting practice. Our clubhouse is used at no cost by the local chapter of the Girl Scouts of America as their clubhouse.

Our park provides for a ballfield for Little League.

Our park is used by the local populace throughout the year. There is a basketball court, a baseball diamond, a small playground, and a walking track (the walking track is used by a large number of the populace in the summer months).

Due to the economy, our club has expanded our Eyeglasses for the Needy --- last year we donated eye exams and eyeglasses to an unprecedented number of persons within our community. We will further included that in the prior year (2008) we raised and donated \$5,000 towards a youngster from a neighboring county to visit China to undergo sight-saving stem-cell treatment which has been successful in improving this child's vision (this type of surgery is not offered/approved/available in the United States -- the total cost of this surgery, including transportation for the youngster and his parents was approximately \$60,000!!!).

Each year we give to a Project Merry Christmas to purchase gifts for the needy children in our community.

We permit our Fairgrounds to be used by the Lewis County Buckaroos 4-H Horse Club for Horse Shows.

In 2009 and 2010, we permitted the use of our grounds and our new horse ring to a Spotted Horse Association for a Horse Show.

In 2009, we went online! We created our first website (<http://tollesborolionsclub.giving.officelive.com>) using website tools and hosting or offered free for non-profit organizations. When the organization that was offering the free website development tools and hosting opted out, we created a second website, [www.tollesborolions.com](http://www.tollesborolions.com), still in use. To promote our fair, we also created an additional website, [www.tollesborolionsfair.com](http://www.tollesborolionsfair.com) in 2015.

Future plans for club. We are committed to continuing to expand our Fairgrounds, as well as our Lions Club and to take an active role in improving our community in any way possible. Although we were fortunate to have made vast improvements to our Community Park and Fairgrounds, we still have a "wish list" of other improvements we would like to implement once we pay off our current debt. We will continue to expand our projects related to Vision and Eyesight Improvement, Project Merry Christmas, and other projects for the betterment of our community.

In 2015, we expanded our livestock barn, adding considerably to the size to accommodate an increasingly larger livestock show. We also placed a concrete floor in our shelter/pavillion building.