A History within a History – The Role of the Delaware State Police at the Delaware State Fair



Presented by the Director of Public Information Sergeant Richard D. Bratz

Just before the roaring 1920's, local residents in Delaware began engaging in the idea of creating a fair for the State's residents. Those early discussions blossomed into larger group meetings which ultimately led to the Kent and Sussex Fair in 1920. The first state fair opened on July 27th, 1920 and has transformed into what we know today as the Delaware State Fair. The State Fair, since its inception, has served as the perfect meeting spot each year for families and friends to

come together to enjoy the local agriculture and experience good quality entertainment.

As the State Fair began to expand in those early years the ever growing popularity of the automobile also ‘gave birth’ to the Delaware State Highway Police which, just a few short years later, became the Delaware State Police. It didn’t take long for the organizers of the State Fair and the leadership of the Delaware State Police to realize that a presence of uniformed State Troopers at the State Fair simply made sense on many levels. As a result, uniformed members of the Delaware State Police have provided site security to the visitors of the State Fair since the early days of the Fair, dating as far back as 1937.



The Delaware State Police work at the Delaware State Fair. Photo by: Doug Curran (furtografer.com) for the Delaware State Police



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In those early years, a handful of State Troopers, some employing K-9 partners, were assigned to the fairgrounds during portions of the State Fair. Over the years the world has changed and The Delaware State Police's role at the Fair has changed with it. That change, is evident in the growth of the physical size of the fairgrounds, the increase in the volume of attendees and the many advances in technology surrounding all aspects of fair which has resulted in many adaptations to both the State Fair operations and the State Police response to those changes.

Present day, several dozen State Troopers, building upon the legacy of generations of Troopers that came before them, provide around the clock coverage of the State Fair for the entire duration of the Fair. The State Police's function at the Fair is very dynamic and multifaceted. Troopers from across the state come together from different specialized units to proudly serve each guest at the fair through a variety of approaches to include the long-standing deployment of State Police K-9's to provide physical security, the utilization of the State Police Mounted Unit to provide enhanced patrol coverage of the fairgrounds, the use of a state of the art Command Post operation to enhance communications, the utilization of State Police Explorers to assist lost children and the employment of a variety of plain clothes Troopers to include members of the Governor's Task Force and the Sex Offender Apprehension and Registration Unit to further enhance the operations of all uniformed personnel.



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Although, the many advancements in policing and the variety of specialty services provided today, the longstanding backbone of the State Police Fair Detail has been the proud women and men in uniform that walk and ride the fairgrounds around the clock creating a safe environment for all visitors and employees of the Delaware State Fair. These Troopers, whose permanent assignments range from Troop #1 Penny Hill to Troop #5 Bridgeville, provide coverage on the fairgrounds every July and tirelessly work to ensure that the visitors of the State Fair can do so both safely and securely.

In addition to providing security at the Fair, the assigned Troopers also welcome the opportunity to engage in meaningful encounters with the numerous State Fair employees, vendors and visitors to the fairgrounds. The State Police's ability to conduct informal outreach to citizens during the Fair provides invaluable opportunities to enhance trust throughout the community and foster strong relationships with the people we serve.









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So as the Delaware State Police continually strive to provide a safe and enjoyable environment each year for the children, women and men that visit the exciting and fun venue of the State Fair’s 300 acres of rides, vendors and exhibitions, our hope is that those attendees realize that we are there for their protection and to provide them with compassionate and professional police services. Through our dedicated service, and help from first responders and private security personnel at the Fair, we hope to secure an environment where Delaware families can come together to create lifelong memories for many years to come!











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