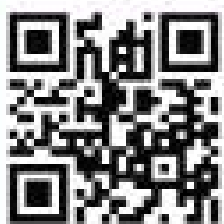


Go wild for Front Range air quality.

Turn off the engine when you're parked to reduce ground-level ozone.

Created from pollutants like car exhaust, ozone is the Front Range's biggest air quality issue and a leading cause of respiratory problems.



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A thrilling Boulder County Fair



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

A smorgasbord of fun

Top: The Dumbo ride turned at just the right speed. Bottom: The big slide.

DAVE GIBSON LONGMONT

Starting at 5,000 feet elevation in the agricultural High Plains and reaching over 14,000 feet in elevation on the Continental Divide, Boulder County's varied landscape is home to 326,000 residents. Its 726 square miles include the cities and towns of Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, Louisville, Lyons, Nederland, and Jamestown. Every summer, the Boulder County Fair attracts thousands of those within its borders and beyond to celebrate its people, beauty and diversity.

Held this year between July 30 and August 11 at the Boulder County Fairgrounds in Longmont, the fair offers a fun place for folks to gather while enjoying livestock exhibitions and animal showings (including cats and dogs), sample carnival food, and listen to music. Bullfighters – not to be confused with rodeo clowns – test their nimbleness in the arena against Mexican and American bulls that would like nothing better than to trample and grind them into the dirt with their horns. The perpetually popular demolition derby always packs the grandstand.

The midway at the Boulder County

Fair is spectacular. Games that involve tossing rings or balls might win you a stuffed animal or other desirable prize. There is an ornate and festively lighted horse carousel for the little ones. Tame-ish rides that rotate fast enough to excite them yet low enough to the ground not to scare them delighted riders. A couple of slides and a funhouse wheel kept the children joyfully entertained.

Older kids were often braver than adults when it came to the big rides. Intimidating names such as the Hurricane, Kamikaze, and Alien Abduction warned of the looming thrills that awaited even the most intrepid. On a ride simply called "Pirate," fairgoers boarded a ship that rocked back and forth on a semicircle track. Half of the passengers faced one way and the other half in the opposite direction so everyone could experience its full effects. The imposing Fireball was as high as the Ferris wheel. It sent passengers around a vertical loop until at its apex, they found themselves upside down. The process was then repeated in reverse accompanied by another round of screams.

Eat, play, and experience Hurricane highs or bullfighter bravery – the Boulder County Fair gave visitors the full range of entertainment.



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

Served up for everyone

Top, left: Step right up and try your luck. Right: Only for the brave, the Orbiter was out of this world. Bottom, left: Safety restraints kept squirmy children aboard.



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