

Many of you may remember Howard in various ways around the Big Horn County Fairgrounds, but there are some distinct ways we will always remember him. Howard almost always had a red solo cup full of ice tea as he was sitting on his gator running from problem to problem, usually a plumbing catastrophe, we all know how frequently the plumbing failed on that fairgrounds. Howard also knew how to tell the best stories, he'd kick back in the bleachers at the show ring, a picnic table, or even the gator and he'd tell you the best story, belting out that deep belly laugh at the end. It echoed across the whole grounds, and everyone knew that was Howie.

Howard grew up in 4-H and FFA, and loved everything about the culture and way of life. He stuck with it after college, starting the agriculture program and running the FFA program in Kaycee for five years. When he and Carol moved back to Emblem to farm with his dad, fair became a part of their lives.

Howard was appointed to the fair board, Carol showed vegetables and car loads of flowers until their three girls were old enough to join 4-H. They learned pretty quickly they would need to solve their own problems because their dad was always busy at the fair.

After his time serving on the fair board, Howard transitioned from farming to working a job that allowed him to become the fair manager. When he started on this incredible journey he knew he wanted to keep the hometown feel while drawing crowds to events and helping the youth out as much as he could. He often took the kids that were ornery and gave them a job, teaching them everything he knew, and was always able to see the good that most people couldn't see. For many years, teenagers across Big Horn County would look forward to being a part of his "fair crew". Managing a bunch of teenagers at the fairgrounds couldn't have been easy and probably created more problems than they fixed, but he always treated his crew with respect, made sure they represented the fair well, and had a lot of fun in the process. Howard was a passionate guy. He was passionate about generational futures, agriculture, small towns, hard work ethic, and believing in the community. He worked hard all year to raise money to pay for acts to come perform at the fair. He started early in the spring to make sure the grounds were well cared for, the grass was green, and the paint was fresh. He worked tirelessly to bring in new vendors for the livestock auction to purchase animals from the 4-H and FFA youth. This culminated in 2008, when he was awarded the Rocky Mountain Fair Association, Fair Manager of the Year award. It didn't end there, when the county fair was over, he packed up, drove down to the State Fair and was the Swine superintendent for many years. He made a lot of changes, but it was worth it to see the joy on the kids' faces every year. He often stayed in the dorms with the kids. Because Howard loved everything fair, and that was the real experience. Especially the chance to visit with everyone and anyone - how he loved people!!

Whenever we think of our favorite memories of Howard, they almost all revolve around fair. It was when he was the happiest. It was always a bit chaotic, but he was in his element. He loved people, he loved animals, he loved fair. It was home for him, when he couldn't be home with his family. The laughs we shared, the work, the meals, the drinks, they were all at the fair. When the discussion came up about his memorial fund Howard said there was no question - it had to go to the thing he loved the most after his family - the fair.

We hope this year at the fair, you all get an ice tea, tell a story about Howard, share a good laugh, and remember him. He was a fixture there for many years.

