

First activity is March 15 kids' essay contest

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

After waiting for two years to be selected, the Chase County All-Stars 4-H Club will bring the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day to Imperial on June 13.

Chris Tomky, coordinator for the event, said the 4-H club has awaited their selection for at least two years.

She said they are excited to finally be selected and to be able to bring such a wonderful event to Chase County.

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day is for children ages six to 14 years old. It will be held Saturday, June 13 at the Chase County Fairgrounds from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The event will be conducted by the Chase County All-Stars 4-H Club in conjunction with the Progressive Agriculture Foundation.

Essay contest kicks off activities

The safety day events will begin on March 15 with an essay contest.

The essay contest is voluntary and open to all children ages 6-14 years. The rules and instructions will be available at local schools starting on March 1.

The topic of the essay will have a theme with agriculture safety in mind: "Living Safe & Growing Strong."

The essays will be separated into three different age groups and judged accordingly. The prizes for the contest will be awarded at the safety day June 13.

Farm and ranch safety

Each year, many children are killed or injured on America's farms and ranches.

Tomky said children often see farm and livestock operations as exciting playgrounds, providing endless hours of fun and adventure. But these facilities, livestock and equipment can set the stage for tragedy.

During the safety day, children participate in interactive activities that reinforce the importance of taking responsibility for their own safety, respecting parents' safety rules and sharing safety tips with their family and friends.

Hands-on demonstrations teach participants lifesaving choices and reveal the hidden hazards of agricultural surroundings.

Demonstrations will focus on the hazards associated with ATV's, PTO's, electricity, seat belts, fire, chemicals, large animals, meth labs, grain and lawn mowers.

Many exciting surprises and lessons are planned for children attending the first ever Chase County Progressive Agriculture Safety Day, Tomky said.

The safety day set for Imperial is one of more than 385 held in locations across the U.S, Canada, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa to teach rural children how to prevent injuries and reduce the risk of agricultural incidents.

Sponsors of the safety days hope participants will maintain a healthy respect for agricultural hazards throughout their lives, and that, ultimately, the numbers of deaths and injuries among rural children will decline.

Progressive Agriculture Safety Days are sponsored worldwide by: Bunge, Toyota, Tractor Supply Co, Agrium, The Farm Credit System Foundation, John Deere, Kawasaki, Case IH, Monsanto, Pioneer, Shell Lubricants and State Farm.

Along with these corporate sponsors, the Chase County All-Stars will be seeking out local sponsors to help fund the Safety Day in June.

While the cost of such event is significant, Tomky said the 4-H club is hopeful that the support of local businesses, families and organizations will surpass the needed funds in order to have a successful day.

In addition to fundraising, the club is also looking for any safety-related items that could be donated for the children's take-home bags.

Anyone interested in assisting in anyway with the June 13 safety day can contact Tomky at tomky@chase3000.com or 882-4145; Lisa Schilke at tlschike@chase3000.com or at 882-5709; the Extension office, or a member of the Chase County All-Stars 4-H Club.

Registration begins March 15

Parents may begin registering their children March 15 until the May 1 deadline.

Space for the safety day is limited and late registrations cannot be guaranteed a t-shirt or take-home bag.

The registration cost for the day-long activities will be \$5 per child with a maximum of \$15 per family. The registration fee will include a t-shirt, lunch, snacks and take-home bag.

Registration forms will be available at the local schools, newspaper offices and extension offices.