

Fair hosts holiday bike giveaway program

2009-12-03



The New York State Fairgrounds is once again accepting donations of used bicycles that will be fixed up and given away - free of charge - to needy families in Syracuse.

Bicycles in any condition are being collected, repaired and stored in the Fairground's Toyota Exhibit Center until through Wednesday, Dec. 16 on behalf of CNY Family Bike. It is the second year that the Fairgrounds will host the 14-year-old, privately run charity drive.

"We're happy to play a role in brightening the holidays for so many families in need," State Fair Director Dan O'Hara said. "The Toyota Exhibit Center would normally not be used at this time of year, and this program is certainly a worthwhile use of that space."

Last year, about 2,000 renovated bicycles were given away through the holiday program. This year's giveaway will be on Saturday, Dec. 20, at Fowler High School in Syracuse.

Donations to the program are running behind last year, a fact that program organizer Jan Maloff attributes mainly to the economic recession. He's optimistic that the Fairgrounds' well-known location and easy access will encourage donations to increase as the holidays draw closer.

"Having this space at the Fairgrounds has made our work so much easier," Maloff said. "Hopefully, people who come out to events at the Fairgrounds will think about dropping off an old bike while they're here."

The Toyota building will be manned for drop-offs by Maloff's volunteers from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. through Dec. 16. People with bikes to donate should drive through Gate 2, turn right, and deliver their bicycles to the rear of the Toyota Building, across from the side entrance of the Coca Cola Coliseum.

The hours of the drop-off center coincide with several upcoming Fairgrounds' events. The annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Spectacular will be open in the Horticulture Building this weekend, Dec. 4-6; The Talent Company's production of "White Christmas the Musical" will have matinee and evening shows in the New Times Theatre Dec. 4-6 and Dec. 11-13; and the 17th annual New York State Indoor Go-Kart Racing Championship will run Dec. 12 in the Americraft Center of Progress Building.

CNY Family Bike, a registered charity, is seeking both volunteers to help fix bikes and donations of money to buy parts. Anyone interested in helping should contact Maloff at 446-7570.