

FarmAid expected to boost city's economy

By Chris McCubbin
Staff Reporter

Lincoln business and government officials are expecting FarmAid III to be an economic boost to more than distressed farmers.

Bert Harris, Lincoln's economic development administrator and brother of Lincoln Mayor Bill Harris, said that the city is planning a four-day festival in connection with the FarmAid concert, centering on the Haymarket area, which will include entertainers, crafts and a farmers market.

Harris said the mayor's office has been in touch with other cities that

have hosted previous FarmAid concerts, and reports are that "people don't just show up Saturday and leave Saturday night," for a FarmAid event, Harris said.

FarmAid I, in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, was "wild . . . it was really wild," said Kim Pillischafske of the Champaign-Urbana Convention and Visitors Bureau.

She said about 100,000 people live in Champaign-Urbana, and there are about 2,200 hotel rooms in the area (more than 500 less than there are in the Lincoln). To house the 76,000 concertgoers local families opened their homes and cots were set up in the National

Guard Armory, she said.

Pillischafske said restaurants were "super busy" during the concert weekend and local businesses profited from the sale of FarmAid T-shirts and similar merchandise.

Gene Thissen, general manager of the Cornhusker Hotel, said he expects Lincoln to "fill up" like it does on football Saturdays.

Thissen said that the Cornhusker hasn't received any reservations for FarmAid weekend yet, probably because of the recent controversy over a possible FarmAid pullout, he said. But on Sept. 19 he expects every hotel in Lincoln to be full, he said.

While some organizations have already done extensive planning, others are just beginning to make FarmAid plans.

Barb Hager, executive director of the Downtown Lincoln Association, said that her group will definitely sponsor some FarmAid-related events, but that no specific work has been done yet.

"It's our job to keep (concertgoers) here longer and help them enjoy themselves," Hager said.

Jerry Diechert of the Bureau of Business Research said the success of an event like FarmAid cannot be predicted as easily as that of a football game, because for a football game the number and, generally, the composition of the audience is known in advance. For instance, Diechert said, the football crowd tends to come to town early to meet people, and since they come earlier they spend more money. There is no way to tell if the FarmAid crowd

will behave similarly, he said.

Diechert said the central location of Memorial Stadium will probably bring people into downtown businesses.

One question that needs to be asked, Diechert said, is whether the national talent at FarmAid will discourage people from purchasing tickets to see similar acts at the Nebraska State Fair.

When FarmAid threatened to pull out of Lincoln due to financial difficulties Mayor Harris promised that the city of Lincoln would take steps to raise the needed funds.

Bert Harris said that no tax money will be used for the event other than for traffic control and other incidental expenses that go along with an event of this size.

Harris said that inquiries are being made about donations for the FarmAid event. Harris said he expects a non-profit corporation to form soon to solicit contributions. The city's goal is \$25,000, Harris said.

Contract talks smooth, but tension remains

By Charles Lieurance
Entertainment Editor

Although UNL and FarmAid officials have spent the past two weeks amicably etching out a feasible contract for the Sept. 19 benefit concert in Memorial Stadium, hesitant phrases like "virtually assured" and "almost positive" in the media have kept some tension in the air.

FarmAid attorney Joel Cherry warned an eager state media last week that negotiations are not over until pen is put to paper.

According to the event coordinator Tim O'Connor the meeting last Thursday between UNL officials and FarmAid III negotiators over the proposed contract went smoothly.

"There are the makings of a good agreement. There are just a few points such as capacity that need to be worked out," O'Connor said.

Tom Krepel, the assistant to UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale, said most of the issues yet to be resolved in the contract are technical in nature.

As of Wednesday though problems with liability insurance at the stadium had slowed mailing of the FarmAid contract to the FarmAid headquarters.

Many of the issues that proved a problem some three weeks ago when it looked as though the FarmAid III benefit concert would not be held at Memorial Stadium were worked out at last Thursday's meeting. One of the problems, the absence of a large enough backstage area, was resolved by agreeing to use the large indoor practice field in the field house under the North Stadium as a backstage area.

Krepel said that an actual signing of the contract might be postponed until after Willie Nelson's annual Fourth of July picnic, when Nelson's staff has a less hectic schedule.

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Editor's Note:

In celebration of America's 211th birthday the staff of the Daily Nebraskan decided to feature the "Legends of Nebraska."

The most well-known legend is, of course, the Cornhusker football team. Our feature story (pages 6 and 7) includes a history of Nebraska's most watched team and photos of some of the football greats in action.

The UNL campus is full of legends. Many of the buildings were named after famous professors. Samuel Avery, a renowned chemist, for whom Avery Hall was named solved the mystery of the bleached wheat case, which saved much of the state's millers' business.

Although the legend of the Daily Nebraskan is probably debateable, we have a story about its history and coming to be.

The State Capitol building is more than office space, it is considered an architectural wonder.

To help people decide how to celebrate the Fourth, we have included a story on the Holmes Lake extravaganza. There will also be a display of fireworks by the famous Grucci family of New York in Omaha Saturday after the Royals play the Oklahoma City 89ers in Rosenblatt Stadium.