

State Fair Arena Proposal Goes Before Cascade Voters

By DAN THURBER, Secretary-Manager, State Fair

VOTERS OF CASCADE county will have the opportunity Nov. 6 to vote for or against the construction of a new multi-purpose recreation center, commonly referred to as a State Fair Arena.

The building is being sponsored by members of the Fair Board at the request of the county commissioners, business and industrial leaders, farmers and ranchers and interested citizens.

It is proposed that the arena be built on the northwest corner of the Fair grounds, and it is pointed out that the site is now owned by Cascade county as a part of the fair grounds. It would be a steel and concrete structure designed to seat a maximum of almost 13,000 people. It would be provided with heating and air conditioning equipment which means it could be used the year around.

The fair grounds now consists of 102 acres of land and 44 buildings. Except for the administration building, which houses the fair offices, none of the buildings are provided with heating facilities. Their use therefore is limited to summertime activities when the weather is fair and to the storage of equipment and materials that do not require above-freezing temperatures.

Among the facts that have been provided by the proponents of this building project are these:

1. State Fair, as the title might suggest, is in no sense the Montana State Fair. It is completely owned and operated by Cascade county and the title has been adopted purely for its advertising value and because there is no state fair in Montana supported by state appropriations.

2. The grounds and buildings, utilities and facilities have been built from Fair revenue plus a small tax levy over the period of the past 35 years. The project was started in 1927 by a group of progressive businessmen who believed that a well managed fair would be an asset to the people not only of Cascade county but of this entire area. It is all paid for and there has never been a bond issue or debt against it.

3. Great Falls is the largest city in the state and within 125 mile area surrounding the city which is considered our prime trade area there are 225,000 people. In the city itself there is not a building with a seating capacity of more than 2,500 people. We are now deprived of the cultural and entertainment opportunities that would be provided by such attractions as symphony orchestras, name bands, art shows and other star attractions of this type.

With this building we could have professional basketball and hockey and prize fight. We could have large stock shows and sales, industrial exhibits, conventions and church assemblies. Our schools could hold graduation exercises to which parents and friends could be invited, and we could profitably entertain nationally known productions such as "My Fair Lady," the "Lawrence Welk" show and many others.

4. The building would provide a guarantee against loss during fair week caused by bad weather. The rodeo and the night show would be held inside with comfortable seating and air conditioning. A large stock show and sales similar to the one held in Denver each

year would provide an excellent opportunity for all classes of livestock to be exhibited and sold.

5. The arena would be financed from money derived from the sale of general obligation bonds issued by Cascade county. Revenue from the use of not only the building itself but of the entire Fair operation could be used to help defray the operating cost and retire the obligation in 20 years providing the bonds are sold at 3.5 per cent interest.

The Fair is now receiving a tax levy

of 1.9 mills. It is estimated that an additional 1.5 mills will be required for only a period of three years, after which time, no additional taxes will be required because revenue from the use of the building and the Fair grounds will be adequate to pay the bill.

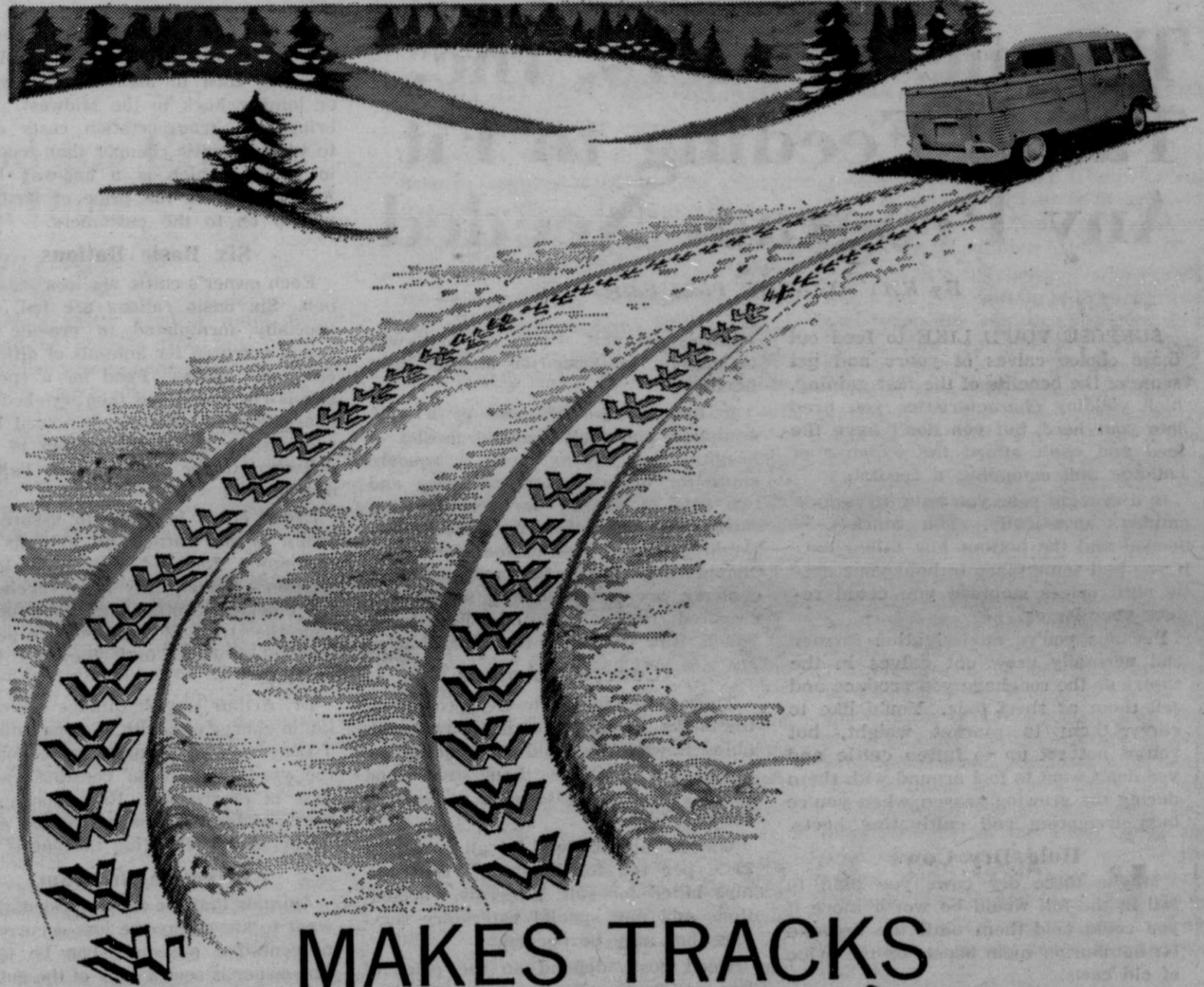
More than 7,000 signatures have been secured on petitions to place the issue on the ballot in the general election Nov. 6.

THE 4-H idea is spreading. Brazil has 200 clubs with over 4,000 members; Columbia has 600 clubs with 9,000 members; Ethiopia 101 clubs with 6,000 members; Iran 600 clubs and 12,000 members; Philippines 4,700 clubs with 116,000 members; Taiwan 5,300 clubs with 65,000 members; Thailand 190 clubs with 7,000 members and Turkey 1,000 clubs with 25,000 members.

FLETCHER THE 4-H'ER



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