Minnesota Mineral Club Moves Its Annual Rock and Mineral Show to the Minnesota State Fairgrounds

April 26, 2021

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The Minnesota Mineral Club has decided to move its Rock and Mineral show to the Minnesota State Fair Grounds and has set the date for the annual event to the last weekend in September, specifically Saturday, September 25, and Sunday, September 26, 2021.

Saturday hours will be from 10 AM to 5 PM with Sunday hours from 10 AM to 4 PM. The event will be held in the Dairy Building and in the outside area immediately adjacent.

The change of venue offers the Club two major benefits over its prior location at the National Guard Armory in Cottage Grove, MN. The dairy building is larger, permitting more dealers and exhibits, which was seen as a major need even before the Covid epidemic made the close quarters at the prior location an issue. The second clear advantage for the new location is its centrality within the Minneapolis St Paul Metropolitan area. ?The Cottage Grove facility was nice, but it was on the far South-Eastern corner of the metro area and we are convinced that limited attendance from the Western and Northern metro area,? says the Club?s Publicity Director Earl Netwal.

?Plus,? Earl contends, ?everyone in Minnesota knows their way to the State Fair.?

The event will be held in the Dairy building which is also well known to Minnesota?s fairgoers. It?s the building where the princess candidates competing for the title of Mary Kay of the Milky Way sit one by one to have their image sculpted in a huge block of Minnesota butter every year.

Notices of the change have already been sent to vendors who have attended the last show in 2019. The 2020 show was canceled due to the epidemic. Invitations will soon be opened for new vendors.

?We expect most of our prior dealers to return, but with the added space we also expect to attract a number

of new dealers we could not fit into the old location,? says John Porter the Club?s president.

Dan Bissonnette, the immediate past president has been tapped to serve as show chairman and will be responsible for recruiting new vendors and managing the entire operation. ?We will need a lot of new volunteers,? Dan says, ?but we are confident we will be able to attract them.?

The club has over 500 members and is one of the top rock and mineral clubs in the Mid-West. It recently celebrated its 75th anniversary, although the celebration was truncated also due to the virus. ?We really hope to make this an exceptional event, to mark our re-emergence post pandemic,? says Dan.

The new venue necessitated another change to the event that will help in the volunteer category. In past years, the club ran a kitchen that produced some additional income for the event but required a lot of volunteer help. This year, the Club will rely on Food Trucks provided by the Fairgrounds. ?We will lose some revenue on that,? says Dan, ?but it will also free up a lot of volunteers we hope to put to better use.?

In addition to an increased number of vendors selling rocks, minerals, crystals, and lapidary items, the event will also have a Kid's area, where many of the freed-up volunteers will be redirected. ?We are primarily an educational organization,? explains John Porter. ?As such, we really like sharing the hobby with kids in the hopes of sparking their interest in the Earth Sciences.?

The Club also supports a scholarship program to support students in Geology and conducts many programs for their own membership and the general public. This past year many of these have been on Zoom.

In addition to the kid?s area, there will be a demonstration area, where experienced lapidarists will demonstrate different machines and skills needed to turn a rock into a masterpiece.

Another popular feature expected to return this year is the rock identification table. ?Everyone seems to have a rock or rocks they wish they could identify,? says Earl Netwal ?We will have experts available to help in that process.?

The Club is also proud of its website https://minnesotamineralclub.org/ which offers many educational videos and other content designed to assist people in identifying rocks and minerals as well as to learn various lapidary skills.

They are also active on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/MNMineralclub with posts that reach in excess of 5000 people on a regular basis.

The Minnesota Mineral Club is a non-profit membership organization run completely by volunteers. They offer

both Adult and Family memberships. For more information on membership go to https://minnesotamineralclub.org/membership-registration/

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Minnesota Mineral Club

We are a non-profit organization devoted to the study of Mineralogy, Geology, Paleontology, and the Lapidary Arts.

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