

5/1/2006 11:08:00 AM

Kids pedal through Fest

By **AUBREY WOODS**

Kids Fest, an event designed to provide children in the community with a day of fun and educational activities, also benefits others.

"I think this is a great thing," Neva Brandenburg said during this year's event Saturday at the Indiana National Guard Armory in Seymour.

This year's festival is the first the 42-year-old woman said she had attended with her 9-year-old daughter, Jasmine Brandenburg.

"It's been fun," Jasmine said. Her favorite activity along with many other children was the bicycle rodeo, which included an educational component for the first time this year.

The rodeo, designed to promote bicycle safety and aimed at raising awareness of helmet-use to prevent brain injury, apparently paid off, at least for the younger Brandenburg.

"I liked being able to wear my new helmet," Jasmine said.

Children who completed both the new classroom component and were able to navigate a bicycle through the course safely received a new helmet.

The younger Brandenburg also showed off her newly learned hand signals while talking about following the rules of the road while riding and Kids Fest in general.

David Petro, 44, of Seymour attended the event with two of his children, Chianne Pettay, 9, and Sabring Pettay, 12.

Although the girls weren't real talkative about the event, Petro said he found the Kids Fest educational and information provided about bicycle safety to children, including his girls, important.

"I think that's a good thing," Petro said.

Justin Mack, 11, also liked the bicycle rodeo, but for a simpler reason.

"You get to ride a bicycle," Mack said. He added he has a bicycle at home but didn't know all the safety rules before attending the event.

The bicycle rodeo was sponsored by Seymour Police Department, The Pardieck Law Firm, Jackson County 4-H and B2 Bikes and Boards, a local bicycle shop.

Brandenburg's mother said she was impressed with the many of activities available at the nearly 50 booths, and she especially liked the chance to have the chance to have a digital fingerprint identification card for her daughter. The digital fingerprinting ID cards were provided by Com Cast.

There's one other thing Neva Brandenburg said she liked about Kids Fest, an event sponsored by the Seymour Noon and Evening Lions clubs.

"It's a great way to bring the community together," she said.

Brandenburg added her only complaint was that it was a little crowded in the armory and some of the lines for booths were long.

Kids Fest coordinator Janice Read said the growth of the event over the years is fantastic, but the



Jaden O'Neal, 4, of Seymour takes his turn at winning a prize at the Childhood Connections booth at the annual Kids Fest on Saturday at the Indiana National Guard Armory in Seymour. (Tribune photo by Aubrey Woods)

committee of volunteers that puts the event together wrestles with finding a larger location every year.

"We keep coming back to here," Read said. "There's plenty of parking and it's easy in and easy out."

There's not many other large venues in the area with good access to traffic, she added.

"It's a nice atmosphere here," she said while admitting it was a little crowded.

The addition of new activities, such as a petting zoo sponsored by the Greater Seymour Chamber of Commerce, seems to bring in more and more people each year, and the growth has just been great, Read said.

Many organizations in the community pull together to make Kids Fest a success, Read said.

One of the groups helping out this year was YoJACK, a youth leadership program for seventh-graders sponsored by Leadership Jackson County.

"It's great that they get to come out and help and learn about service to their community," Read said.