



News photos by Ann Tormet

Posing for a traditional groundbreaking photo Monday - though no one tried to dig into the concrete they were standing on - are (from left): Franklin County Engineer Dean Ringle, county Commissioner Dewey Stokes, Meacham and Apel architects Bob Apel and Jim Mitchell, county Commissioner Arlene Shoemaker, Franklin County Fair Board President Gary Dever, Southern Bleacher Co. sales representative Denny Davis, grandstand committee member David Brobst and Franklin County Agricultural Society Secretary Roy Hoffman.

Work launched on new grandstand

By KEVIN CORVO

Hilliard Northwest News Reporter

Six months after a massive fire destroyed the historic grandstand at the Franklin County Fairgrounds, a groundbreaking ceremony was held to begin the construction of a new grandstand.

Well, actually, no ground was broken. But Franklin County commissioners, Norwich Township trustees and other officials still posed with shovels Monday to mark the beginning of work on the new structure.

"This is something big for us, and I think you will all be proud when it's done," said Roy Hoffman, a member of the Franklin County Fair

Board.

The original grandstand was destroyed in a fire Oct. 18. The new grandstand is expected to be completed in June. The 2001 Franklin County Fair begins July 15.

Insurance will cover the construction cost, but some losses as a result of the fire were not covered, including property belonging to the Junior Fair Board.

Several fund-raisers for the grandstand have already been held, and another is scheduled for May 12.

A square dance and silent auction will be held from 7 to 10 p.m. May 12 at the Gan-yard and Edwards buildings at the fairgrounds. Admission is \$5 per person or \$10 per family.

The event features a square dance, cake walk, door prizes and a silent auction. Also planned is a 50-50

drawing, in which the winner takes home half of the proceeds.

Donated items such as new and used merchandise, gift certificates, toys and tools are being sought for the auction. They may be dropped off at the event site between 8 a.m. and noon May 12.

Proceeds from the auction and dance will go toward the grandstand fund and the replacement of items lost in the fire.

"I'm pleased with the support we have received from the community," said Phyllis Ernst, public relations director for the Franklin County Fair.