



Media Release

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Release Immediately: 10/11/07

Local Artists will Carve into 300 lb Pumpkin at Great Pumpkin Contest

Local artists Nancy Lehman and Paul Reyburn, Los Osos, will take on a 300 lb giant pumpkin on Thursday night, October 18, to transform it into a giant pumpkin sculpture at the 2nd Annual SLO Co. Great Pumpkin Contest. The two estimate that the pumpkin sculpture will take between 10 and 15 hours of carving and will complete the final ghoulish touches prior to the final weighing.

Pumpkins were the first medium Lehman, a lifelong artist, art teacher and graduate of California College of Arts and Crafts, utilized as a child. Her sculpture experience prior to giant pumpkins includes mixed media, bronze and glassblowing. Reyburn, a local carpenter whose artwork includes multimedia sculpture and painting has displayed his works of art at local galleries in San Luis Obispo County and at his residence in Los Osos.

The 300 lb giant pumpkin was grown at the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau Office using a special blend of Kellogg Fertilizer and plenty of water. The pumpkin will be on display at Coast National Bank in San Luis Obispo until close of business on Tuesday, October 16. From there the pumpkin will undergo a two day transformation of carving and shaping.

The contest will be held on Chorro St. during the San Luis Obispo Downtown Association's Thursday Night Farmers' Market, between 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. on October 18. Giant pumpkins can grow between 200 and 1,700 pounds. A pumpkin education center, presented by the Foundation for Agriculture Awareness, will be set up for kids who want to learn more about the giants.

Some giant pumpkins grow to be large enough that it takes upwards to 10 men to move each pumpkin in order to move the pumpkins, the SLO Co. Young Farmers and Ranchers will be donating their time as the official Pumpkin Lifting Team sponsored by Quinn Rental Services.

Officials from the San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures and the Cal Poly BioResources and Ag Engineering department will be on hand to certify the results, while local celebrity judges will award prizes in the most beautiful and most unusual categories sponsored by Farm Supply. The top three heaviest pumpkins will roll home with a share of \$1,500 from Coast National Bank, while, a special prize will be awarded to the heaviest pumpkin grown by a 4-H and FFA student sponsored by Kellogg Garden Products.

Enthusiastic attendees at the 2006 contest witnessed the weighing of the heaviest pumpkin ever grown and weighed in San Luis Obispo County which tipped the scales at 714 pounds.

Entry forms and official rules for the contest have been made available to all contestants at the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau website www.slofarmbureau.org. All pumpkins entered must be a shade of orange and must be grown from a giant pumpkin seed germinated on the Central Coast.

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Mission Statement:

"To lead San Luis Obispo County in the protection, promotion and advocacy of agriculture for the benefit of our members and community"