

## **RVers get V.I.P. treatment at Høstfest**

Olaus and Elsie Njos of Nemo, S.D., have attended at least 25 Norsk Høstfests since the heritage festival began 30 years ago. The Njoses plan to be there for Høstfest's 31st anniversary celebration as well, camping on the grounds in their travel trailer during the event. "Høstfest continues to be a highlight of the year for us," says Olaus.

Norsk Høstfest draws RVers like the Njoses back year after year, partly because they feel at home in their "home away from home," parked on familiar ground, with lots of activity and entertainment just outside their doorstep. It's the ideal way to take time to enjoy the event.

Høstfest retains a down-home, friendly atmosphere that makes folks feel "velkommen." According to Chester Reiten, president of Norsk Høstfest, "It's like a small town on a Saturday night, where neighbors can get together over a cup of coffee and some warm-hearted camaraderie."

Nowhere is this more true than in the special RV section of the State Fairgrounds lot. RVers have their very own hospitality center, where they can gather to enjoy free coffee and donuts, and meet other friends who make their annual pilgrimage to Høstfest in their campers or motorhomes. For regulars and newbies alike, it's like a mini RV rally!

"When people come into the RV Hospitality Center at Høstfest, it's like a big reunion with everyone shouting and embracing each other like long-lost friends," says volunteer Irene Miller. "If they're here for the first time and don't know someone, they'll have new friends by the time they leave."

Alan and Elma Doerr have been volunteer managers of the RV Hospitality Center ever since Høstfest began. "This will be our 31st year," says Elma.

The past few years, the center volunteers have had to add two more guest books to the one they normally keep, to accommodate the cluster of visitors. The volunteers invite the campers to write their comments in the books. "Høstfest is such a friendly place," one guest wrote. "We have friends from British Columbia to Florida that we've met at Høstfest."

According to Elma, when the RVers come in, they're given a pin to push into a map, pinpointing their hometown. "We've got pins on the map from Alaska to Florida," she says. RV Hospitality Center hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Staying in their own home on wheels is especially handy for RV guests. There's ample parking for around 1,000 vehicles, complete with electrical hookups. Hot showers, fresh water, and garbage and drainage service are also available. Shuttle buses ferry guests back and forth to the Høstfest doors.

Some of the RVers become so enamored with Høstfest that they volunteer to help out at the event! And many stay for the whole week, arriving early enough to take in the events that cater to RV guests. Writes one guest: □We arrive the Monday before and take everything in.□

We invite you to do the same!