by Kurt Johnson

The conversion has begun in Grand Island, where hard-hat workers are preparing Fonner Park to become the new host of the Nebraska State Fair.

The \$42 million makeover is on schedule and on budget, according to director of sponsorhip and program development Christine Rasmussen, who offered an update last week in Aurora.

"The most exciting part about a new fairground, from my perspective, is being part of the building process," Rasmussen told the Aurora Area Chamber & Development group. "What you've got coming to Central Nebraska are some of the finest, state-of-the-art and largest facilities of their kind in the United States."

The biggest single footprint on the campus will be a combination sheep barn, show arena and cattle barn, where fairgoers will find 260,000 sq. ft. under one roof.

"You can go from one to the other without going outside, so the sheep barn, ag arena and cattle barn will be the largest facility in the country, combined," she noted. "The arena is climate conditioned, but since animals are used to the weather they will have natural air."

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