Good crowd converges on Rice Fest

Acadiana bureau

CROWLEY — Clear skies and record crowds greeted the 47th International Rice Festival as more than 200,000 people milled among the festival booths and carnival.

Visitors also watched a multitude of contests that marked the annual two-day event considered to be the oldest and largest harvest festival in Louisiana.

A lovely blonde computer programmer from Buras was chosen from a field of 31 contestants to become the 1983 senior Rice Festival queen. She is Michele Pauline Meche, representing the Plaquemines Parish Orange Fair and Festival.

Contests dotted the two day program, including a hound and hare race of 10 giant hot air balloons; rice eating, cooking, grating and demonstration contests; arts and crafts, cajun accordion, harmonica and fiddle contests; a frog jump, duck and goose calling and cow chip throwing contests and many others.

Friday is considered children's day at the Rice Festival and the 1983 Junior Queen is Anne Louise Broussard, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Broussard of Crowley, while reigning as Junior King is Joshua McGee, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael McGee of Eunice. The world's fair pelican was the grand marshal for the largest ever children's parade on Friday afternoon with more than 100 units featuring a theme of children's movies and TV programs.

Climax of the festival came Saturday afternoon as the 320-unit grand parade led by Dallas Cowboy football star Walt Garrison as grand marshal and featuring both Gov. Treen and former Gov. Edwin Edwards maneuvered through the crowded streets two hours.