There's a pretty cool party going on just 20 miles to the west of Aurora.

For the 145th consecutive year, the Nebraska State Fair is unfolding as a statewide celebration of our ag-based heritage. Much has changed during that span, but the core components -- agriculture, animal exhibits, entertainment and lots of good food -- remain very much the same. Topping the list of change, of course, is the state fair's move from Lincoln to Grand Island four years ago. Many were skeptical the move would work in terms of sustained attendance and funding, but four years later it's pretty clear that the gamble paid off.

Grand Island's one millionth state fair visitor -- Aurora's own Angela Lents and her family -- passed through the gates on Saturday. We'll be watching with interest at fair's end to see if the total head count continues its upward trend.

Now that the newness of the Grand Island venue is wearing off, we're starting to see why this transition made sense. The game plan wasn't just to move the event 90 minutes west on Interstate 80, but rather to give it a fresh, new look that would draw bigger crowds and more exhibitors, which in turn would attract more sponsors and revenue needed to keep this giant Ferris wheel rolling.

So far, so good.

Another interesting twist, from a local perspective, is the benefits of living so close to this annual showcase. Folks from Hamilton County have volunteered each year, both in a coordinated one-day effort, and in other various roles. There are judges, board members, ticket takers and other hands-on volunteers who all call Hamilton County home.

There's a financial impact here as well, though that is harder to quantify. We do know that the local hotels and campgrounds are full, and it's not a leap of logic to assume that many others are fueling up as they head to or from Grand Island.

There is so much to see and do at the Nebraska State Fair. The event seems to just keep getting bigger and better, confirming yet again that this bold move was a great idea. Kurt Johnson