Facts About The

American National Exhibition in Moscow

July 25-Sept. 4, 1959
FACTS ABOUT THE AMERICAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION IN MOSCOW

Purpose

To strengthen the foundations of world peace by increasing understanding in the Soviet Union of the American people, the land in which they live, and the broad range of American life, including American science, technology and culture.

Dates, Site, Attendance

To be opened on July 25 by Vice President Nixon, the exhibition will continue for six weeks, closing on September 4. The hours are from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day.

The exhibition buildings and displays have been mounted on a 400,000-square-foot site -- the equivalent of more than two city blocks -- in Sokolniki Park, a 1,500-acre wooded recreational park 15 minutes by subway from downtown Moscow and also serviced by bus and trolley lines.

This first major American exhibition ever held in the USSR is expected to draw 3 1/2 million visitors from various parts of the Soviet Union. A nominal admission charge is being made -- one ruble for adults, a half ruble for children and servicemen.

(By reciprocal agreement, the Soviet Union is holding an exhibition in the Coliseum in New York City June 30 to August 10.)

The President's View

President Eisenhower, in a message prefacing the official guidebook, said "it is my fervent wish that by this means, and through the corresponding exhibition which your country is holding in New York City, the people of our two great nations may gain a better understanding of one another. Thus can the foundations be strengthened for our co-operation in the achievement of mankind's greatest goal -- a fruitful and flourishing world at peace."
Scope

This is an effort to project a realistic and credible image of America to the Soviets through exhibits, displays, films, publications, fine arts, performing arts. The exhibition reflects how America lives, works, learns, produces, consumes and plays; what kind of people Americans are and what they stand for; America’s cultural values.

In a sense this is a "corner of America" in the heart of Moscow.

Unlike the Brussels Fair, which was international, this is an American exhibition.

While there are industrial displays, this is not a trade fair.

Themes

There are these major categories:

America’s Land and People  
(physical characteristics, political geography)

America Lives  
(city and country)

America Works  
(industry, farm, labor)

America Produces  
(agriculture, industry)

America Consumes  
(marketing, kitchens)

America Learns  
(education)

America Explores Man and Universe  
(science, research)

America Creates  
(architecture, painting, sculpture, music, publications, photos, films)

America Travels  
(transportation, travel bureaus, communications, hotels, motels, resorts)
America Plays
(sports equipment, playgrounds, photography, radio, television)

America's Community Life
(social and voluntary organizations, public health, opinion polls, community activities)

The Geodesic Dome

A Kaiser Aluminum gold-anodized geodesic dome building, 200 feet across and 78 feet high, with 30,000 square feet of floor space, is the information center about America. It is designed to handle traffic at the rate to 5,000 persons an hour.

The unique geodesic dome principle was developed in 1947 by the American architect-engineer R. Buckminster Fuller. It is like a huge half orange in appearance, and has no interior supporting pillars.

Around its inside perimeter are exhibits on space research, education, labor, health and medicine, agriculture, basic research, synthetics and nuclear energy. Around the exterior of the dome is a "Gallery of Americans" -- five-foot photographs of American figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Walt Whitman, Abraham Lincoln and Mark Twain.

A continuous documentary film portraying key aspects of American life is projected on one-third of the dome's interior circumference by means of the unique Charles Eames motion picture technique which uses seven simultaneous screens, each 30 by 20 feet, with a single Russian-language sound track.

Ramac 305, the "electronic brain," provides split-second answers -- in Russian -- to thousands of questions about the United States.

Four American voting machines are on hand for Soviet visitors to vote for their favorite exhibits and displays.

The Exhibition Hall

This is a 50,000 square foot fan-shaped steel structure 28 feet high, glassed front and rear and covered by an accordion-pleated aluminum roof. It has displays of American cultural attainments and exhibits showing the results of the American economic system: the abundance so broadly shared by the people. They reflect the great freedom of choice enjoyed by the American family.

A special interior exhibit design of modular steel permits maximum use of space. The display framework creates mezzanine areas from which the visitor may observe exhibits above, below, and on the same level as he is standing.

The Plastic Pavilions

Three plastic pavilions covering 15,000 square feet are located in three clusters and will house these exhibits:
(1) The Museum of Modern Art's "Family of Man" exhibit of 500 photographs assembled by Edward Steichen;

(2) an exhibit of contemporary American architecture showing models and 100 black-and-white photographs of schools, churches, shopping centers, skyscrapers and other buildings throughout the United States; and

(3) a display of American wearing apparel ranging from work clothes to formal attire. The majority of the models are nonprofessional, and include three American families who have been selected by the fashion industry to represent various economic groups. The live presentation consists of a half-hour show four times a day, with commentary in Russian.

Circarama

This 360-degree "movie in the round" which was so successful at Brussels, will be housed in its own circular building. Circarama has been redone and brought up to date by Walt Disney with new sequences and a Russian sound track.

Outside Area

Outdoor displays include:

An American six-room ranch-type home completely furnished.

Twenty-two 1959 automobiles from all U.S. manufacturers, the most luxurious to the most economical.

Sporting and camping equipment, ranging from skis and fishing tackle to sailboats and outdoor cooking facilities.

Farm equipment such as tractors and combines.

A children's playground featuring a concrete adobe-type play house, an iron grid "magic carpet" and a sand lot for tots.

A Polaroid camera demonstration which not only illustrates the "picture-in-a-minute" technique but provides some 15,000 Soviet visitors with souvenir photographs of themselves.

Brightly colored kiosks where Pepsi-Cola is served free to visitors. Other kiosks display American newspapers, magazines and books.

Variety of Displays

Exhibits on American productivity reflect a strong, growing economy. They include food demonstrations, home appliances, toys, clothes, cosmetics, television, Hi-Fi presentation, musical instruments, a completely furnished model apartment, a home workshop, and an exhibit on packaging techniques. There also is a travel display showing American interest in travel throughout the United States and abroad.
In the food demonstrations, Soviet visitors see for themselves how an American housewife can dish up a full-course dinner in a matter of minutes, using frozen foods and ready-mixes. Demonstrators will prepare 110 varieties of food.

The clothing display consists of fabrics and synthetic fibers and tells the story of the needle trades unions and the leather industry. There are also sewing demonstrations illustrating the use of American patterns.

A fine arts display includes 49 American paintings and 23 works of sculpture selected by a non-government jury of experts as examples of the variety and wide range of American art produced from 1918 to the present.

A completely equipped color-TV studio provides eight hours of programming daily on a closed circuit, using sixteen 21-inch color TV viewing screens placed at strategic points throughout the exhibition area. The color camera will be trained on Soviet visitors, and tapes will be played back so that the Soviets can see themselves on the TV screen.

Music in stereophonic high fidelity sound will be broadcast to a children's play area and a picnic area.

Cultural Content

Displays reflecting America's culture include some 10,000 books and a book-mobile, newspapers from every state in the union, hundreds of magazines, paintings and works of sculpture, photography, high-fidelity music, record albums, the "Family of Man" exhibit, models and photos of 100 outstanding architectural achievements in the United States, do-it-yourself exhibits, crafts, and performing arts, including the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and an Ed Sullivan variety show, in a downtown Moscow theater. Religious activities are portrayed in many ways.

Guides

Seventy-five young Americans selected on the basis of their personality, their knowledge of Soviet and American affairs, and their command of the Russian language, are serving as guides. They lead groups and are prepared to answer questions about any phase of the exhibition or about America. In addition, numerous individual exhibitors have Russian-speaking American personnel in charge of their exhibits.

Organization

The exhibition, because of its scope and importance, is a joint endeavor of the U.S. Government, American industry, and other private groups and organizations. Government participation centers in the Department of State, the Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Information Agency, with the Director of USIA, George V. Allen, serving as coordinator.

Harold C. McClellan, Los Angeles industrialist and former Assistant Secretary of Commerce for International Affairs, is general manager.
Advisory Committee

Assistance and counsel on content have been given by an advisory committee of 51 representatives of U.S. education, industry, foundations, science and the arts, as well as by a group of American newspaper and radio/TV correspondents formerly stationed in Moscow.

Architects, Designers, Builders

Architects for the dome and the exhibition hall are Welton Becket & Associates of Los Angeles. George Nelson & Company of New York are chief designers for the exhibit, responsible for all interior and exterior displays. Nelson also designed the plastic pavilions which were constructed by Lunn Laminates, Inc., of Huntington, Long Island. The aluminum geodesic dome has been erected by Lydick Roofing Company of Fort Worth, Texas. The exhibition hall was fabricated and erected by Reynolds-Feal Company of New York and Milan, Italy. Landscape architect and site planner for the exhibition is the New York firm of Robert Zion and Harold Breen. The Rand Development Corporation, with materials contributed by industry, constructed the two pools of fiberglass laminate for the boat displays at no cost to the government.

Industry Cooperation

Although it is not a trade fair, nearly 800 American firms have contributed products and/or funds to the national exhibition. Many have paid the shipping and are underwriting the cost of maintaining their own personnel at Moscow. Cost of the plastic pavilions was borne by a group of leading firms in the plastics field. The total value of industry's contribution is impossible to determine but runs into the millions of dollars in goods, transportation, and services.

Financing

To meet the opening date, time would not permit obtaining a special supplemental appropriation from Congress. Therefore, the President authorized the use of $3.3 million of Mutual Security funds in addition to the $300,000 already appropriated by Congress for a U.S. exhibition in Moscow in 1958 which did not take place. In addition, the Department of State is handling the performing arts and the U.S. Information Agency is underwriting the costs of the "Circarama" motion picture projection.

The President, meeting with the Advisory Committee at the White House on January 24, said the funds expended for the exhibition are "about the best investment the Government has made in a long time."

The USSR agreed to buy the aluminum geodesic dome building and the main exhibition hall for $375,000 after the exhibition. Not only will the United States Government receive a return for the buildings, but also will save the cost of removing them and restoring the site to its original state. The exhibition buildings will remain in the Soviet capital as a continuing reminder of modern American architecture and engineering achievement.
The Soviets have made available water, gas, electricity and sewage disposal, provided various landscaping improvements in the park and extended the paved roads up to the exhibition grounds. The U.S. has landscaped its exhibition area and leased the 400,000 square feet in Sokolniki Park for $142,250.

U.S. - USSR Exhibition Agreements

The agreement to hold an American Exhibition in Moscow and for the Soviets to stage one in the United States stems from the East-West cultural exchange agreement of January 27, 1958, which noted that exhibits are an effective means of developing mutual understanding.

On September 10, 1958, a "protocol agreement" was signed between the U.S. and the USSR providing, reciprocally, for exhibits to be held in Moscow and New York City during the summer of 1959 "devoted to the demonstration of the development of science, technology and culture."

An agreement outlining details under which both exhibitions will be held was signed in Washington on December 29, 1958, between the United States and the Soviet Union. The agreement calls for a high degree of mutual confidence and trust. Political content is to be avoided by both sides.

The General Manager's View

In the words of Harold C. McClellan, "We definitely are not putting on either a propaganda show or a trade fair. It is going to be as comprehensive a presentation as we can make it of the way the American people live, work, and enjoy the fruits of their labor. It will reflect our attainments in the cultural and scientific fields as well as in the production of consumer goods. We will endeavor to exhibit the type of things the Soviets are interested in seeing. The Soviet people are tremendously curious about America, and we hope to in part satisfy that curiosity. ... I am confident that this exchange of exhibitions will contribute to an easing of tensions."

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