



Dancers happy to be back in the arena

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The sounds of bells float on the warm evening air as people in brightly colored clothes greet each other, set up drums and adjust the last pieces of their beautifully detailed regalia.

The Mille Lacs Band District III Representative, Wally St. John, hosted a pop up powwow at the Grand Casino Hinckley Arena, Wednesday, June 16.

Several multi-generational families gathered in small groups to enjoy the event as 40 dancers competed for cash prizes.

Announcer Byron Ninham welcomed everyone and said the powwow was a great opportunity to finally get back together, dance and have fun.

“No live streaming here,” Ninham joked to the crowd. “We’re in person.”

Head dancers Reuben Crowfeather Jr. and Shiana Smallwood led the eager dancers into the arena. Drum groups Timber Trails, Little Otter, Red Willow and Storm Cloud took turns singing and playing for the dances.

Crowfeather, 26, said he is excited to dance at powwows again after a forced year off due to the pandemic. He attended with several generations of his family, from a two-year-old niece to his 63-year-old grandma. Crowfeather is from Maple Plain, Wisc. and said he participates in the Men’s Northern Traditional Dance, as well as the Men’s Woodland Dance. His regalia includes intricate beadwork done by his brother and an otter pelt cap complete with two eagle feathers gifted from his grandfather.

“It feels amazing to dance again,” Crowfeather said with a huge smile as he rested between dances.



PHOTOS BY JAMIE LUND/PINE COUNTY CURRIER

