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End of an era

Key Points

- South St. Paul stockyards close after 122 years.
- The stockyard facility once was the world's largest.
- Zumbrota and Albany markets will have additional sales.

By PAULA MOHR

DESPITE the drizzle and temperatures in the low 30s, about 2,500 people traveled to the South St. Paul stockyards April 11 to be a part of Minnesota history.

They attended the Central Livestock Association's final feeder cattle sale and celebration that marked the closing of the stockyards after 122 years in business. People came from across the state and the U.S.; the crowd included a former auctioneer living in Denver and a former employee living in South Africa.

"The day turned out surprisingly well, considering the weather we had," says Bob Young, CLA division manager. "A lot of people came to send us off."

Buildings on the 27-acre market site are scheduled to be demolished this month, and a business park will be built.

In its heyday, the stockyards covered 267 acres, Young says. By 1976, the South St. Paul stockyards was deemed the world's largest. More than 3 million head were funneled through the facility the year prior. However, urban sprawl and Internet livestock mar-



FINAL SALE: A yard worker urges a pen of cattle through an alley at the South St. Paul stockyards to the last special feeder cattle sale. The stockyards closed April 11.

keting started affecting sales numbers. Several years ago, CLA's board and management decided it was time to close the South St. Paul site. In anticipation of the closure, CLA modified and expanded its Zumbrota and Albany market sales schedules to provide ad-

ditional marketing options for South St. Paul customers.

Timeless goodbye

The stockyards' final day included a memorabilia auction, which earned \$21,000 for the CLA Foundation Scholarship fund, and a special feeder cattle

sale with 2,002 head sold.

The last animal auctioned went for \$2,400. The 900-pound beef heifer was donated by David and Paul Krueger, Hastings, and purchased by Dircks Livestock, Carver.

Her name? Timeless.

"It was an emotional day for me and for others," says Young, who has worked at the stockyards for 33 years. "During the last calf sale, I got a lump in my throat."

■ For more on the South St. Paul stockyards, see Page 4.

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