

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo

For information
Contact Ted Harbin

(660) 254-1900
imteditor@gmail.com

Harrison taking funny to Guymon

GUYMON, Okla. – For 10 December nights in the City of Lights, John Harrison rolled out an oversized protective barrel that served as his front-row seat for bull riding during the 2013 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.

As the barrelman selected for ProRodeo's super bowl, Harrison's job was to man the specially made steel keg as an extra piece of protection for bull riders, bullfighters and just about anybody else inside the Thomas & Mack Center's arena at the time.

"It's an awesome feeling for me and my family because it's a position that's voted on by your peers," said Harrison, who will serve as the barrelman, funnyman and entertainer during this year's Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 2; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 3; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 4, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena.

"You feel it's something you deserve. I'm tickled to death I got it. As a trick rider, I got to perform at the NFR three other times, but to be there every night and be part of the NFR personnel was just amazing."

Harrison has been nominated as one of the best in the business for much of his clowning career. The Soper, Okla., cowboy joined the PRCA as a trick rider in 2001, then transitioned to clowning in 2008. The grandson of world champion bull rider Freckles Brown, rodeo always has been part of Harrison's life. Being part of the NFR is just a big part of a family legacy that makes Harrison special.

"I love packing the barrel and being there for the cowboys, but I wasn't there to be part of the entertainment," Harrison said. "I didn't get a microphone or anything I'm used to doing at a rodeo, but I'm glad I was selected to be there."

He will be a big part of the entertainment that is Pioneer Days Rodeo. Just as he was a few years ago when he performed in Texas County, Harrison will pack several acts and a lot of comedy along with his barrel.

"We had a lot of people around here who have told us they wanted us to bring John back to Guymon," said Earl Helm, chairman of the volunteer committee that produces Pioneer Days Rodeo. "He's funny and has a lot to offer the fans who make our rodeo one of the best in the world."

That's true. In addition to hysterical acts that showcase Harrison's talent and athleticism, the Oklahoma man serves as a valuable piece of the puzzle that helps make for a near-flawless performance each time he speaks.

"John is good, clean family fun," said John Gwatney, the production supervisor for Pete Carr's Classic Pro Rodeo, the primary livestock producer for the rodeo. "He brings his family with him when he can and includes them with his act."

Until recently, Harrison traveled the rodeo circuit with his family: His wife, Carla, and their three children, Addison, Cazwell and Billie. Now that Addison is in school, the family outings take place less often; still, family is a big part of who the clown is in and out of the arena.

"It's his rodeo background, because he grew up in this sport," Gwatney said. "For us, he helps us with the timing of our production. When you know what needs to be done and have someone that doesn't have a big ego, then he's willing to do work and willing to do that for the production."

That's the key reaching fans with a variety of entertaining items. Whether it's a trick riding display that will leave fans in awe or his parody of rodeo queens, Harrison has a lot of ammunition in his bag.

"I think the biggest thing since the last time I was in Guymon is that the acts have just gotten better," he said. "I have an Olympic act that I didn't have in Guymon the last time. The one thing I love about Guymon is that with four performances, I can do something fresh every time.

"I do this for the love of the sport. Growing up with it, you enjoy it. Now I can actually make a living at it, so that helps."

While family is a big part of who Harrison is, he realizes that rodeo serves as a foster family of sorts.

"The friends and the 'family' you meet on the road is a big deal for us," he said. "Plus if it wasn't fun, I wouldn't do it."

Not only does he have fun, he brings a lot of it with him. That's why people in Guymon are excited for his return.