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Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo Where Champions Play the First Weekend in May

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Guymon rodeo to be inducted

Longtime community event recognized by ProRodeo Hall of Fame

GUYMON, Okla. – Oklahoma’s richest rodeo in Guymon has long been considered one of the best by the cowboys and cowgirls who play the game.

The rodeo world has taken notice.

The Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo will be inducted into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame during a special ceremony Aug. 8 in Colorado Springs, Colo. The honor is recognition for the work by the local volunteer committee that produces the annual rodeo.

“This is a huge honor for Guymon, for Texas County and for all the people that have put in so much hard work over the years,” said Ken Stonecipher, the production coordinator for the rodeo and a longtime member of the committee. “I got the call (Thursday) telling me we were going to be inducted, and I couldn’t believe the timing.”

Rodeo action will begin Monday morning and last seven straight days, culminating in the four performances set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 1; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 2; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 3, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena.

“Being inducted into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame is an incredible honor for us,” said Jim Quimby, the committee chairman, noting that the committee is part of the Guymon Chamber of Commerce. “We are very proud of our rodeo. We have a core group of people who work all year to put this on, but this is a community event. We wouldn’t have the kind of rodeo we have without our community.”

That community includes all of Texas County and most of the Oklahoma Panhandle. The rugged terrain is home to some of the greatest cowboys in the history of the sport, many of whom still make their homes on the soil not far from the storied arena. It’s the perfect place to test a cowboy’s mettle and talents.

Texas County also is home to Oklahoma Panhandle State University, which has a strong rodeo tradition. In fact, a number Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association world champions have ties to the area, including team roping heeler Jhett Johnson and saddle bronc riders Billy Etbauer, Robert Etbauer, Tom Reeves, Jeffrey Willert and Taos Muncy; together they own 12 gold buckles.

“We call OPSU Bronc Riding U. because there are so many great bronc riders who went to school there,” Stonecipher said. “The reality is there just a lot of great cowboys who have gone to school in Goodwell, but there are a lot of outstanding cowboys and cowgirls who grew up around here, too.”

Each year, the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo features a who’s who of top contestants with ties to the Oklahoma Panhandle. This past December, two of those returned home with the reserve world championships: saddle bronc rider Cort Scheer, a two-time runner-up to the world champion, and Joe Frost, a senior at Panhandle State who is riding this weekend at the Doc Gardner Memorial Rodeo, the final event of the 2014-15 regular season.

They all return to Guymon for Pioneer Days Rodeo. This year’s event features more than 950 entries, which bodes quite well for a rodeo of this stature. Not many other professional rodeos have a contestant field that large.

“We pride ourselves in being a rodeo for the cowboys,” Quimby said. “We want to have the best hospitality, and we want them to know they’re welcome here. It all comes back to be a huge benefit on our community.”

The induction also says a lot about the labor produced by the hard-working committee.

“Everyone looks forward to coming to Guymon for Pioneer Days every spring, and it’s an honor for our company to be a part of that event,” said Pete Carr, owner of Pete Carr Pro Rodeo, one of the top five livestock firms in the PRCA each of the past two years. “Guymon’s rodeo and its surrounding communities have some of the richest history of any place that we have the privilege of working with.

“The fans there are some of the most knowledgeable in the rodeo industry, and they have come to expect an NFR-caliber show during each and every performance.”

So have the cowboys. In August, the rest of the rodeo world will know, too.