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

For information
Contact Ted Harbin

(660) 254-1900
imteditor@gmail.com

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Rodeo is a big deal for Guymon

GUYMON, Okla. – There is much in this community to celebrate.

With a population of more than 12,000, Guymon is the largest town in the Oklahoma Panhandle. It will get considerably bigger the first week of May for the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 6; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 7; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 8, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena.

In addition to the four world-class rodeo performances over the weekend, the week proceeding will be filled with the top cowboys and cowgirls in ProRodeo; they all will be battling for one of the most prestigious titles in the game.

“The town basically triples in size that week,” said Jada Breeden, the executive director of the Guymon Chamber of Commerce. “We have studies that show we have a \$7 million economic impact that week of the rodeo, including all of the Pioneer Days festivities that are part of our annual celebration.”

The rodeo features nearly 1,000 contestants competing over eight days of competition, beginning Monday, May 2. Because Pioneer Days Rodeo always takes place the first weekend in May, the schedule works great for cowboys and cowgirls to make the region their home for the week.

“They stay here, they refuel their vehicles here and they eat here, and that makes a big difference in this community,” said Jim Quimby, chairman of the volunteer committee that produces the annual rodeo. “Rodeo is a big part of Guymon, and having an event like this in our community is special.”

In fact, Pioneer Days Rodeo was inducted into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame last year and will forever be enshrined in the Colorado Springs, Colo., museum. That’s a pretty strong statement for the largest single event in the Oklahoma Panhandle every year.

“Rodeo is our history, our heritage,” Breeden said. “There’s only been one time in the last 84 years that they didn’t have it, and it was because of World War II.”

That legacy also includes many cowboys and cowgirls that have ties to Texas County, whether it’s because of their alumni status to Oklahoma Panhandle State University’s rodeo team or just carrying on a strong legacy that’s been part of the ranching lifestyle that is living in that part of the country.

This has been the home to world champions like Robert Etbauer, Billy Etbauer, Tom Reeves, Taos Muncy, Jeffrey Willert, Rocky Patterson and Jhett Johnson.

“By having rodeo competition for eight straight days, the contestants feel at home here and stay,” Quimby said. “They all have these specialized rigs that they live in when they’re rodeoing, so that makes it nice and convenient for them.

“We have great community support, and, in turn, the cowboys and cowgirls recognize that and support this community while they’re here. It’s a big deal for our community.”

That win-win situation is proof why Pioneer Days Rodeo is special for all involved.