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

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RELEASE DATE: April 25, 2017

Rodeo celebrating family with matinee

GUYMON, Okla. – Saturday has always been a special part of the Pioneer Days celebration.

The parade kick starts the morning as it winds through this city of about 12,000, the largest town in the Oklahoma Panhandle. There are barbecues and reunions and plenty of time spent with family. The committee that produces the annual Pioneer Days Rodeo recognizes that.

“This is a community celebration, and we want people to get together and enjoy one of the greatest things we have in this town, the rodeo,” said Earl Helm, chairman of the rodeo committee, which is part of the Guymon Chamber of Commerce. “We have set our Saturday matinee as our family day, and we have a lot going on with that.”

The best value is advanced tickets. Adult tickets are \$15, with children ages 11-15 set at \$5; children 10 and younger can get in for \$5 or with two cans of food that will be donated to Loaves & Fishes. Tickets at the gate are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children ages 11-15; kids 10 and younger is the same as presale.

“Because there is so much activity after the parade, we are going to utilize our pre-sale pricing at the gate for the Saturday matinee,” Helm said, reiterating that an adult ticket for the Saturday afternoon performance is \$15. “We’re also going to have drawings for free bicycles for the kids 10 and under, and we will give those bikes away to the winners who are in attendance at that rodeo performance.

“As a committee, this is our way to tell all those families ‘thank you’ for always supporting our rodeo. We are able to bring to town nearly 1,000 contestants every year because of that support, so it’s pretty important all the way around. This year, we’re also going to keep selling pre-sale tickets at our ticket outlets through the weekend. In the past, we’ve stopped pre-sale tickets before the rodeo began, but we wanted to extend the pre-sale opportunity all weekend at those ticket outlets.”

The four performances are set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 5; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 6; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 7, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena.

“It’s a cowboy’s rodeo,” said Andy Stewart, who announces Pioneer Days Rodeo with local cowboy Ken Stonecipher. “It’s in the heart of Cowboy Country. The people who come to that rodeo are farmers and ranchers. In that part of the country, cowboy is still king.

“It’s a Western rodeo, and I think the reason it’s so special is the history and the prestige. It’s been a huge rodeo for a long time. When you win that rodeo, you get a beautiful belt, and that belt from Guymon means something to those contestants.”

In fact, Pioneer Days Rodeo was inducted into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame in 2015, a true testament to the prestige of the biggest events annually in the Oklahoma Panhandle.

“For me, it’s a real honor to be part of that rodeo,” Stewart said. “It’s one of those rodeos you’ve heard about your entire life, and when you get there, it’s almost surreal.

“It is an amazing experience to be part of that old-school set-up. It’s a unique venue in that the arena is built into the side of a hill, and you come in, walk down and get to see everything. It’s a great atmosphere.”

That’s just what fans have come to expect in Guymon.