

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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# **Egger takes on rodeo role**

GUYMON, Okla. – This community in the middle of the Oklahoma Panhandle has a proud tradition.

For decades, Guymon has hosted the annual Pioneer Days Celebration, honoring the history of the people who developed this region that was once known as No Man's Land. Mitch Egger knows that history. He was born and raised in Guymon and, for all but three years, has made it his home.

"From a historical value, Pioneer Days Rodeo has always meant something special to the people around here," said Egger, a financial adviser for Edward Jones in Guymon. "It's tradition. I think so many people in this area make money through agriculture, so it's important that we honor that tradition."

Egger is the new chairman for the rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 4; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 5; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 6, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena.

By taking the reins of the volunteer committee, he is bringing together several aspects of his life. As a financial planner, he understands the need for fiscal responsibility. As a former cowboy at Hitch Ranch, he knows the importance of animal agriculture to this community. As a farrier, he continues to live the Western way of life.

"Mitch is a very successful businessman who grew up in this community," said Ken Stonecipher, a former rodeo chairman who has served on the committee for more than two decades. "He cares very much about Guymon. He's organized and committed to making things right."

Yes, he is. He is back for a second go-round with the rodeo committee. He first served on the committee two decades ago, handling many of the behind-the-scenes details that come for the volunteers on the committee. He knows what it means to organize the livestock and prepare the arena. Most importantly, he knows what it means to volunteer.

"Volunteers are what make our rodeo happen," Egger said. "I don't think everybody realizes how much it takes to put on a rodeo, and all the work that's done comes from the volunteers. It is so important that people volunteer to be part of the committee and will be willing to donate their time and talents to this venture."

It's quite an undertaking. The committee not only prepares the community and sponsors for seven days of competition, but it also has to get the arena ready for nearly 1,000 contestants who will battle for one of the most prestigious titles in Oklahoma. This is Oklahoma's richest rodeo, which has been enshrined in the ProRodeo Hall of Fame.

"With a committee made up of volunteers, one of the most important things as chairman is to get more volunteers," Stonecipher said. "He knows he needs to keep people interested, committed and engaged in the work that the committee does."

Egger comprehends that. He hopes to keep all the volunteers involved. When the last study was done, the economic impact of that Pioneer Days weekend was \$2 million. That's a financial boon to the Guymon community and Texas County.

"For me, one of the things about Pioneer Days is bringing the community together," said Egger, who has three children – Briana, Addie and Cabe – with Jessica, his wife of 23 years. "I remember as a

kid watching the rodeo, which is an attempt, in some form, to keep the cowboy spirit alive. I think it brings the community together.”

It’s that type of reflection that makes Egger the perfect fit for the committee. He brings a ton of experience and a boatload of talent to the group of volunteers.

“He understands not only the heritage of rodeo as a sport but has the knowledge of what rodeo means to this community,” Stonecipher said. “Mitch worked at Hitch Ranch and has shod horses for years. The first thing you have to bring to that job is the passion for the community and for the sport of rodeo.

“When those things come together, it just bodes well for Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo.”