

NEWS RELEASE

Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo

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Committee points to community in saying bye to tour

GUYMON, Okla. – For the first time in the nine-year history of the ProRodeo Tour system, the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo will not be involved.

And that's a good thing.

Over the years, the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association has tweaked and changed the tour system, and the Guymon rodeo has tweaked right along with it. The changes this year, though, forced the volunteer committee's hands.

“We had a chance to stay on tour, but it was going to take away from our rodeo,” said Bret Franks of Goodwell, a three-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier who has worked on the production of his hometown rodeo for years. “We always have three rounds in the timed events, but the tour format this year calls for two rounds, back to back.

“That works really good when there are other rodeos going on, but it really takes away from Guymon, where those guys usually come to town and stay all week.”

When you're talking about hundreds of contestants, you can understand the importance of keeping those cowboys and cowgirls in town. For the contestants, it helps ease the rigors of the rough-and-tumble rodeo road. They have a home-away-from-home in the Oklahoma Panhandle for a week.

For the community, it pays to the tune of more than \$2 million in economic impact to Guymon with the rodeo going on that week. Hundreds of cowboys, cowgirls and their families will fuel their rigs in Texas County, eat in Guymon restaurants and entertain themselves at spots all over town.

“We opted to not go with thee tour since the PRCA changed the format,” Franks said. “Literally, we're sticking with the traditional cowboy rodeo. For the timed events, the guys will have three rounds, fresh calves and steers.

“That's the main thing, what Guymon's all about: The cowboys.”

Competition begins April 27, and something will be happening at the Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena all week. Performances are set for 7:30 p.m. May 1, 2 and 7:30 p.m. May 2; and 2 p.m. May 3.

“When we first got on the tour, the events were televised, and it was great to see Guymon showcased on national TV,” said Ken Stonecipher, a longtime member of the committee who served as the rodeo's chairman for several years. “But then they changed the TV format. We haven't been on TV for several years, and that was a big draw for us to be on tour.

“But over the years, we've made a name for ourselves as a rodeo the contestants want to come to, whether it's a tour rodeo or not. The contestants will be here, no doubt about it.”

Organizers have spent several months preparing for the rodeo, raising money to help further entice the biggest names in the sport to play the game in Texas County. The more money that's available, the more contestants want to compete.

"We weren't getting anything for being on tour," Franks said. "If anything, it was hurting us. We opted not to go that route, and I think it's a good decision."

When it comes to a springtime event, the rodeo committee takes many things into consideration. They know that in timed events, world champions will compete alongside rookies, and all have a chance to win one of the most prestigious events in the country.

It's the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo, where cowboys become legends.