

In Cowboy Country, Eureka Pro Rodeo Friday And Saturday With Western Action

It'd be tough to find more cowboy country than the Flint Hills of Greenwood County, Kansas, so "rodeo time" is a most significant community affair.

"That's the sixth annual Eureka Pro Rodeo, Friday and Saturday evenings, with a full slate of accompanying activities planned," according to Robin Wunderlich, editor of the Eureka Herald.

Certifying official rodeo time, festivities kick off Friday morning, Aug. 18, when the rodeo clown and stock contractor visit Eureka Nursing Center and Village Park, Wunderlich said.

"They head to Madison for a special presentation at the elementary school, before returning to Marshall Elementary School in Eureka at 2:30," the editor explained.

"The Eureka Pro Rodeo Association has again coordinated the action," Wunderlich pointed out. "Members have donated a great deal of time and effort while serving on the committee working to bring the best heart-stopping rodeo action to the community."

The rodeo has again been advertised on WIBW and Country Legends 106.9 and promoted on WibwNewsNow and the Kansas Agriculture Network.

Action gets underway at 6:30, Friday evening, when gates to the Eureka Saddle Club Arena open, proclaimed Jamie Nelson, one of those hardworking rodeo committeemen. There'll be a mutton busting for youngsters six and under at 7 o'clock.

Friday's performance is dedicated "Military Appreciation Night" honoring those who've served and are serving, with flag representing all divisions to be flown.

Free admission for the slack competition of team roping, tie down roping, barrel racing and steer wrestling is 8 o'clock Saturday morning.

Eureka Main Street will be packed with horses, Western attractions and spectators everywhere at Saturday afternoon parade at 2 o'clock.

"Lineup is 1:30 in the park, with all businesses, ranchers and sponsors encouraged to participate," welcomed Nelson, who can be contacted at 620-582-9565.

VFW Post 2712 and Shrine units will lead the procession recognizing the late Mike Burke as grand marshal, who'll also be honored prior to the evening rodeo performance.

Gates open 5:30, Saturday, with kid's games at 6 o'clock, and second go-round of mutton busting 7 o'clock.

"Saturday's rodeo performance at 8 o'clock is dedicated as Shrine Night and Tough Enough To Wear Pink," Nelson said. "Shriner's Hospitals for Children and the June Bug Foundation will be recognized."

Rodeo climax dance is at the Half Dollar, with the band Low Water, featuring Eureka's own Tate McCoy.

"First and foremost, top Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) contestants from around the country are entered at Eureka, competing on livestock supplied by United Rodeo Company of Palestine, Texas," Nelson said.

"What's a rodeo without the best livestock, and certainly Danny Reagan, Mark Owen and Don Reno have very top broncs, bulls, and speed event cattle," Nelson continued. "Additionally, we're fortunate to have Scott Grover, Weston, Missouri, as announcer, and Gizmo McCracken, Fairview, Missouri, as the clown-funnyman."

Eureka is part of the Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeo Series, which includes Mound City and Coffeyville.

"So, we're expecting contestants wanting to garner series award points, and also spectators eligible for an engraved knife drawing by attending all series rodeos," Nelson noted. "The drawing will be here Saturday night, with proof of attendance being a ticket stub or program from all rodeos."

"Scott Grover has been announcer for the Prairie Circuit Finals Rodeo six times, the National Circuit Finals Rodeo, the Professional Bull Riders (PBR) Tour and the PBR World Finals," Nelson said.

A Morrowville, Kansas, native, Grover said, "I'm more comfortable behind the microphone in a full coliseum than I am in a one-on-one situation. You get the excitement of the crowd."

"I like taking people to almost screaming their heads off, to almost tears, to right back to screaming again. I think it's the thrill of control, in a way," the announcer added.

A former agriculture education instructor, Grover stepped out of the classroom and into a full-time rodeo announcing career.

"Gizmo McCracken started his career as a bullfighter and moved into stand-up comedy at a show in Branson, Missouri," Nelson said. Gadgets and gizmos that went sour were often part of his routine, hence the name "Gizmo, The World's Greatest Inventor."

Contracting PRCA rodeos 25 years, McCracken has worked Circuit Finals Rodeos, the Dodge National Circuit Finals Rodeo, Cheyenne Frontier Days, been nominated Coors Man in the Can, Clown of the Year, and Comedy Act of the Year and featured act at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.

"I like to keep people looking for me and wondering what I am going to do next," Gizmo said.

"The acts share a high energy, clean, family oriented feel which adds a fresh new atmosphere to any rodeo he is a part of," Nelson assured.

"The late Mike Burke, Severy, born and raised in Greenwood County, was an avid supporter of rodeo and ranching," Nelson said.

"Graduating from Climax High School in 1942, Burke was in ranching partnership with his father," Nelson said. "Mike rode bareback horses and competed in the Wild Horse Races during the 1940s and early 1950s."

"In 1962, the Burke Ranch starting running cattle for Oppenheimer Industries," Nelson continued, "while Mike handled cattle inspections for Oppenheimer Industries in many other states."

Mike Burke passed away March 16 this year, at the age of 92, while his family continues the ranching operations.

Eastern Kansas Rodeo Series Early Leaders Named

The 2017 Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeo Series, a joint effort between the Linn County Fair Rodeo, Mound City; Inter-State Fair & Rodeo, Coffeyville; and Eureka Pro Rodeo, Eureka continues this week, according to John Teagarden, LaCygne, series coordinator.

This series features the three largest professional rodeos in eastern Kansas with eight Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo performances in nine days.

Advertised on WIBW, Country Legends, The BIG 94.5 Country, and promoted on WibwNewsNow, and the Kansas Agriculture Network, competition continues this week at Coffeyville Wednesday-Saturday, Aug. 16-19, and Eureka, Friday-Saturday, Aug. 18-19.

Early event leaders were determined with the completion of the Mound City rodeo last weekend. Blue Mound cowboy Jeff Miller jumped to the lead in two events by placing first in both steer wrestling and tie-down roping.

Other event leaders: bareback riding, Jared Keylon, Ft Scott; saddle broncs, Kirk Nelson, Branson, Missouri; team roping, Adam Rose, Willard, Missouri, and J.W. Beck, Moville, Iowa; and barrel racing, Tracy Nowlin, Nowata, Oklahoma.

Series event winners will receive a Maynard Trophy Buckle. Reserve winners in each of the seven events will be awarded an engraved Moore Maker knife.

The drawing will be during the Saturday, August 19, Eureka Rodeo. Proof of attendance will be a rodeo program from Mound City and a canceled admission ticket or program from Coffeyville.

Beutler & Son Rodeo Company, Elk City, Oklahoma, will produce the Coffeyville rodeo. The Eureka rodeo will be produced by United Pro Rodeo, Palestine, Texas. The livestock of New Frontier Rodeo Company, Gypsum, was featured at Mound City.

The 2017 Eastern Kansas Rodeo Series is sponsored by the three participating rodeo associations plus area businesses that include Better Horses Radio, Cleaver Farm & Home, Chanute and Twin Motors Ford, Iola.

Padre Says:

"Even when you're mad, think before you talk. The words you say can only be forgiven, not forgotten."

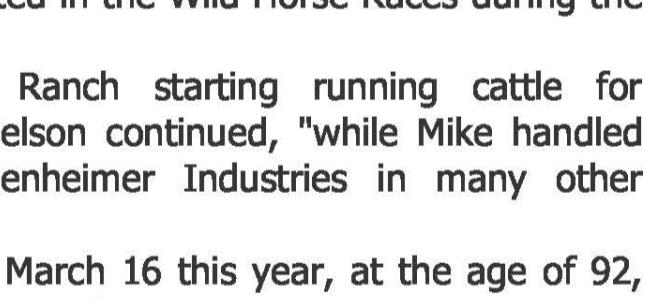
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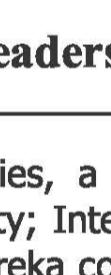
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