

WILLIAMS LAKE STAMPEDE ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2020



ROTARY STAMPEDE COMMUNITY SPIRIT BREAKFASTS AND CAR-B-QUE EVENT

In July and August, the Rotary Club of Williams Lake and the Stampede Association met to discuss the planning of an event that would connect our community in the way that Stampede weekend always has - with breakfast! Both organizations worked hard to plan and organize a safe and fun pancake breakfast that our full community could attend and participate in. Following the success of that first drive-thru event in July, we were able to offer an additional breakfast and car-b-que in August.

Organizers had a wonderful time cooking for our community and hosting attendees at the rodeo grounds - money raised from both of these events was donated to the Hough Memorial Cancer Society of Williams Lake, The Williams Lake Harvest Fair, and C Plus and Duffy Rodeo contractors.

Thanks to everyone that attended, keeping that Stampede Spirit alive and well!

STAMPEDE ROYALTY APPLICATIONS - NOW OPEN!

Applications to be our next Stampede Queen and Princess are now open! All young ladies between the ages of 16 -23, living in the Williams Lake area, and those that are skilled riders are invited to apply - deadline is 22 January 2021.

If interested, please contact wlstampederoyalty@gmail.com and check out the website for an application here: <https://williamslakestampede.com/stampede-royalty>



WILLIAMS LAKE STAMPEDE AUGUST JACKPOT RODEO

On 5 Sept, the WLSA partnered with C+ Rodeos and Duffy Rodeo to host a small Jackpot rodeo event at the grounds. The event had 17 contestants in the bareback, saddle bronc, and bull riding events. All monies raised through this initiative were combined with our breakfast and car-b-que offering held in late August and provided to our stock contractors.

Our Association would like to thank C+ and Duffy Rodeo organizations for their partnership in organizing this event, the competitors that participated and adhered to all of our health and safety protocols, and to our valued volunteers that assisted in making this day a success!

We are very much looking forward to the day when we can host more rodeos and share that with spectators, friends and sponsors in our community - we are planning for 2021 and saving you a seat!



DRIVE IN MOVIE NIGHTS AT STAMPEDE PARK

The WLSA was happy to play host to two incredible drive-in style movie events at the Stampede grounds in July.

These events would not have been possible without the initiative of Fresh Air Cinema and the full sponsorship of FORTIS BC. The Stampede Association had a blast helping out at the two night event parking cars and chatting with you all!

The WLSA donated all proceeds from these nights (\$2,317) to a local community food initiative - the Good Food Box Program with the Women's Contact Society.

Because of the generosity of the Cariboo, Williams Lake was the leader in funds raised during this FORTIS BC tour - way to go!



REFLECTIONS ON RODEO AND A PANDEMIC

SUBMITTED BY TIM ROLPH, VICE-PRESIDENT

It's 5:30 on a Friday evening, March 20, 2020, the drive home is interrupted by the ringing of my cell phone. I find a place to pull off the road and check the caller ID, it's the rep for one of the Williams Lake Stampedes largest corporate sponsors, calling from his home in Iowa. These guys don't just support our event, they're involved with rodeo all across North America. "Tim", he said "I've just spent the last day on the phone with our corporate offices, due to Covid-19, we're suspending our sponsorship of all rodeos, North America wide. While I appreciated him reaching out to me personally I felt like I'd just been punched in the gut, it was just the beginning.

Only a few weeks earlier, in mid-January, we began hearing of a virus quickly spreading in the Wuhan province of China, but, it was so far away how could it possibly impact us? Dubbed the Wuhan Flu it was given the official name of COVID-19. It soon reached beyond the borders of China and by February we were in the midst of a global pandemic.

In mid-March the NBA and NHL suspended play, mid-season. Rodeo Houston cancelled a week into its 3 week run. "It will only be for a short time", we were told, but, days turned weeks, and weeks have stretched into months.

Sports and live events at every level have suffered and rodeo has been hit especially hard. A sport steeped in tradition, heritage, and culture it does not enjoy the benefits of TV contracts, or mainstream attention. It is, for the most part, a grass roots sport that relies on volunteers, sponsors, and paying spectators in the stands, a raucous beer gardens usually helps too! With health authorities in Canada, at every level, implementing strict guidelines on the size of gatherings and non-essential travel the feasibility of hosting a rodeo just wasn't possible.

On April 6 the Williams Lake Stampede Association convened a special meeting of its board of directors and made the tough decision to cancel the 2020 Stampede scheduled for June 25-29. The last time our event was cancelled was due to World War 2, a span of 75 years. We were not alone, the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) did not host a sanctioned event after February 29. From Morris, Manitoba to Cranbrook, BC all CPRA events were cancelled, including the Canadian Finals Rodeo slated for Red Deer, AB, November 3-8. The iconic Calgary Stampede never opened a turnstile.

South of the border the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) were able to host a few events, depending on individual state regulations. Over 60% of their sanctioned events were cancelled, including legendary rodeos like Cheyenne, WY, Reno, NV, and Pendleton, OR. The NFR, the Super Bowl of rodeo was relocated from Las Vegas, its home since 1984, to Arlington, Texas.

This pandemic has hit the sport of rodeo with a devastating effect in 2020, at every level. But, rodeo is a sport built around resilient and determined individuals, we will move past this and continue to support the heritage, culture, and sport we all embrace. And, know this, once we are able to gather and celebrate again the Williams Lake Stampede will be there to welcome and entertain you at the "Greatest Show on Dirt!".





Let R Buck



Stampede 2019



Rodeo Time!



Stampede Memories

