

Chuck Wagon Races...Fast Action and Family Fun

If you like fast paced, wild and western entertainment, check out one of the area's growing equestrian sports. Chuck wagon racing is packed with excitement, thrills and spills as teams match up and speed around the open field track.

It's not just a wagon race. Each team includes a driver, a "cook" and an outrider. At the beginning of the race, the driver is the only one ready and waiting for the start. When the gun is fired, the cook must load a small "chuck box" and bedroll in the back of the wagon, then climb into the wagon as it circles the starting barrel. The outrider must mount his/her horse and begin the race by circling the starting barrel...keep in mind the wagons are pulled by "race ready" teams who can be difficult to contain while waiting for the gun. They are ready to go and the start is often as exciting as the finish. The outrider must finish the race ahead of the wagon to qualify, and may experience difficulty mounting the horse, as it is also rearing to go at the sound of the gun. Teams are matched in divisions according to the type of wagon and the size/weight class of the horses or mules pulling the wagons and racing teams often travel with several sets of horses and mules. Races feature specifically designed racing wagons, as well as classics and buckboards. Team names are also entertaining....What About Bob, Shut Up Stupid, Dumb and Dumber, Camo Cowboys....and they're not all men. Several teams include women.



Livestock Coalition Garners Governor's Support

Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin endorsed the newly formed Oklahoma Livestock Relief Coalition during a press conference at the state capitol January 23. The coalition provides a funding channel for people to support the efforts of livestock producers and law enforcement agencies who are often given the task of caring for abandoned and neglected livestock.

Oklahoma Agriculture Secretary Jim Reese noted last summer's drought created a difficult situation for livestock owners and the lingering effects still impact livestock producers. "We had the hottest and driest summer on record, creating hay shortages that continue today," Reese said.

OLRC Spokesperson Dr. Carey Floyd said veterinarians are working closely with law enforcement agencies to handle calls on neglected and abused large animals. Gov. Fallin encouraged the public to help the OLRC take care of these animals.

The OLRC mission is to provide emergency financial resources to local law enforcement agencies that have seized abused and neglected large animals and assure humane care of the animals. The OLRC structure allows concerned citizens to donate funds intended to assist Oklahoma law enforcement agencies with large animal

Along with the wagon races, most events also include mounted horse and mule races, stickhorse races for kids, footraces and whatever else may be challenged in a race. Spectators are encouraged to bring their horses and participate in a trail ride, and primitive "horse camping" space is usually plenty. Because seating is usually limited, spectators are also encouraged to bring lawn chairs. Music, food, western vendors, Sunday morning cowboy church and campfire gatherings are all part of the experience, offering fellowship and great family entertainment.

Two racing associations have local races scheduled in the area: The Midwest Chuck Wagon Racing Association, centered in Southwest Missouri (mcwra.com) and The Arkansas Chuck Wagon Racing Association, based in Plumerville, AR (acwra.com). Tranquility Ranch near Bokoshe, OK plans a week-end of racing and western activities May 4 - 6, the Williams Ranch near Skiatook, OK will host a championship racing event May 11- 13, and the Ward Ranch near Wilburton hosts the 3rd Annual "What About Bob" Chuck wagon racing week-end June 9 - 10. Others are also scheduled and are listed under *Miscellaneous* in the What's Happenin' Section.

The National Chuck Wagon Championship Races are held annually in Arkansas, beginning the week before Labor Day and continuing through the holiday week-end. According to the event website, it all began as a party for a few friends at the Eoff Ranch near Clinton, AR. Then, Dan Eoff came up with the idea of racing chuck wagons. He recalls, "Had eight wagons and 200 people show up one Sunday evening. The next year we promoted it a little, and had 16 wagons. We just kept promoting it and it's got real big. Now, it's grown into the largest chuck wagon race event in the United States. Last year, some 30,000 people attended." The Labor Day event features top name entertainment along with wagon races, horse and mule races, children's activities, vendors, camping, trail rides, etc. Visit chuckwagonraces.com for more information.

neglect, abuse, and abandonment cases. Contributions will be used to provide feed and reasonable emergency care for seized animals during the initial 30-day phase of these cases.

Charter Members of the Oklahoma Livestock Relief Coalition are: Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry, Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Oklahoma Humane Federation, Oklahoma Livestock Marketing Association, Oklahoma State University, Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, OSU, Center for Veterinary Health Sciences, Oklahoma Veterinary Technician Association, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Foundation, Oklahoma State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, American Farmers and Ranchers, Murray State College, Veterinary Technology, Poultry Federation of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Pork Council, Oklahoma Sheriff's Association

The OLRC is accepting monetary donations only. Donations may be made through the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Foundation, a 501(c)(3) at www.okvma.org or send to OVMF, PO Box 14521, Oklahoma City, OK 73113. Checks can be made payable to OLRC or OVMF. For more information, please call (405) 478-1002.

Oklahoma PRCA Ropers Shine at Wrangler Million Dollar Gold Tour Event

SAN ANTONIO – If a cowboy wants to put a tough season behind him, San Antonio is the spot to make it happen, and Nick Sartain (Dover, OK) and Kollin VonAhn (Durant, OK) did just that at the AT&T Center February. 25.

The 2009 world champions won the short round at the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo – a Wrangler Million Dollar Gold Tour event – with a 4.2-second run to push their rodeo earnings to \$19,323 apiece and get their 2012 seasons off to a great start.

The other big bonus for Sartain, VonAhn and all the event winners were the \$5,000 gas cards awarded by the San Antonio committee, something that could become a major asset when it's time to hit the road hard in the summer.

"If you've bought any fuel lately, you know it's high," Sartain said. "It's really nice for us to win two of them, because we travel together quite a bit."

Johnson Back on Track Following Double Knee Surgeries

Mike Johnson, who holds the PRCA tie-down roping record with 23 qualifications into the Wrangler NFR, is fully recovered from twin knee surgeries and is looking revitalized. Johnson, who turns 48 on March 4, won the Feb. 17-18 Southern Miss Coca-Cola Classic Rodeo in Hattiesburg, Miss., with a time of 9.1 seconds and then earned a sixth-place check at the Feb. 16-18 Brighton Field Days Festival & Rodeo in Okeechobee, Fla.

Wrangler NFR Ranks No. 1 in the World, According to Venues Today

The Wrangler National Finals Rodeo ranks No. 1 in the world as the highest-grossing ticketed event for venues with seating capacity of 15,000-30,000 in the recently released *Venues Today Year-End Report*.

Venues Today, a trade publication for sports and entertainment facilities, ranks venues internationally, by total gross revenue from October to October. The rankings are based only on special, one-time or multiple-performance ticketed events.

The Wrangler NFR has sold out every performance of its 10-day run each December for nearly a quarter of a century.

The Thomas & Mack Center, where the Wrangler NFR has been held annually since 1985, placed fourth overall on the *Venues Today* list of highest-grossing venues of its size in large part because of the "Super Bowl of Rodeo" being held there.

"We operate the most unique set of facilities in the United States," said Gerry Bomotti, Senior Vice President for Finance and Business at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas (UNLV). "There is no other example I know of where facilities on a university campus host the depth and breadth of events we do, while still giving a great experience for all the (UNLV) Rebel fans."

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