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Fair rodeo switching to Kansas riders

By Vera Sloan
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Getting more for less was part of the reason for changing the source of the rodeo riders for the 2009 Thomas County Fair, and Fair Board members say it looks like fans will get their money's worth this year.

The board opted this year to give up the national Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association in favor of the Kansas Professional Rodeo Association. Rodeo dates at the fair are Monday, July 27, and Tuesday, July 28. Mutton bustin' will begin each evening at 6:30 p.m., with the rodeo to follow at 8 p.m.

As opposed to the traditional quick ride into town by members of the national group, with many of the riders leaving the next day to compete for bigger prizes in Dodge City, the Kansas cowboys will stay for the two-day event this year.

The main problem with the national association was that by the second day, said Clair Schrock, a Fair Board member who heads up the rodeo committee, most of the cowboys had left.

"This is a working man's rodeo association," Schrock said. "It's all about families getting together for a good time, and they will come from a 60 to 100 mile radius, and there will be people we see throughout the summer at these events."

"The cowboys are good, they are professional, and it looks like there will more contestants."

The rodeo will add two events to the usual seven, Schrock said.

"We are adding women's break-away-roping and the '40-40' team roping," he said. "The 40-40 is for contestants over 40 to compete as a men's team, with header and heeler, or it also allows for a female roper to team up with a male partner."

Schrock said they are expecting 35 teams of ropers, 15 to 20 other ropers and 15-20 steer wrestlers, plus bull riders, bareback riders, bronc riders, barrel racers, clowns and a specialty act.

Stock contractors this year will be the J and J Rodeo Co. and Stock Contractors from Leoti.

"Ticket prices have not increased," Schrock said, "and rodeo fans are sure to get their money's worth this year."

There will be a business man's calf dressing contest during each night's performance, Schrock said.

"The calf dressing contest is hilarious," Schrock said. "At least five teams of businessmen will catch a 300-400 pound calf, dress it with underwear, a bra and socks."

"The event is pure entertainment, and the businessmen are really good sports when it comes to the calf-dressing event."

Schrock said the grandstand holds 2,200 people, and it would be good to see it full this year.

Waiting on the wheat



Workers at the Cornerstone Ag elevator southeast of town on County Road Q were loading a grain train Friday as trucks continued to arrive with more wheat. Railroad workers left the engines parked near the road until the train is ready to move. Each car of the 100-plus on the train can carry five to six truck-loads of grain.

STEVE HAYNES/Colby Free Press

Colby woman goes extra mile for travelers

By Vera Sloan
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Maybe everyone's had a friend who would give them the shirt off their back, but what about the gas cap off their car?

That happened to a Colorado woman and her boyfriend's mother, who arrived in Colby last month on the way to Cape Cod and found they had left their gas cap somewhere along the way.

Ginny Myers, who admits to being in her 60s, was taking Marilyn O'Brien, in her 80s, back to her home in Massachusetts after a visit to her son in Aspen.

The women stopped in Colby to put gas in the 1987 Volkswagen Cabriolet they were driving, and discovered the gas cap missing, left at a previous stop somewhere between Aspen and Colby.

"I was told to go to Stan's Automotive on Martin Street, and they would help us, so off we went to Stan's," O'Brien said in an e-mail to the *Colby Free Press*.

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Many changes in store for county fair parade

The Thomas County Fair Parade will see some big changes this year. Traditionally set as the conclusion of the county fair, the parade will now be the kick-off event on Tuesday, July 28, with the rest of the fair events following through the weekend.

The parade will begin at 5:30 p.m. at Eighth Street and Franklin Avenue in downtown Colby, traveling south on Franklin to Cedar Street and from there to the fairgrounds.

Holly Stephens, executive director of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, said the Chamber is taking over the parade this year. It will incorporate the fair's theme, "Thrills, Squeals and Ferris Wheels."

Anyone can enter a float in the parade, she said, including clubs, businesses and individuals. There will be a first- and second-place award for each of the eight categories. First place in each category will get a \$40 Chamber gift card and second place \$20. The judges will choose one float that best represents the fair's theme to win a \$50 gift card.

One float already set to appear in the parade is the Kansas Emergency Medical Services mascot, Terry the Traumasaurus. Thomas County Emergency Medical Technician Dawnell UMBERGER said "Terry" will be manned by a volunteer from the county ambulance crew.

Entry forms are available at the Chamber's office and must be turned in by Friday, July 24, Stephens said. There is no entry fee. For information, contact the Chamber at 460-3401 or at colby-chamber@thomascounty.com.

Team walking coast to coast to support vets

By Kevin Bottrell
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Walking across a 3.5-million-square-mile country, it would be easy to miss a town like Colby, but Keela Carr's feet took her right through here last week on a walking trip from one side of the United States to the other.

Carr, 36, of Florida, is walking across the country to raise awareness and money for wounded and homeless veterans. She and her team started out from Fort Irwin, Calif., near Barstow, on June 14. The trip has taken them from the Mojave Desert, to the Four Corners to Denver and finally through Colby. From here, she headed east, plans to end up in Washington next month. There she will visit Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia and place a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Carr said she will also visit Walter Reed Hospital and present a wounded soldier with a quilt made by Prayers and Squares, a club made up of World War II-era wives, widows and nurses.

Along the way, Carr said, she has stopped to meet veterans wherever she can. She spent time with Native American veterans in Arizona, visited the Veterans Medical Center in Denver and met veterans out harvesting wheat in Kansas.

"That's probably been the funnest part of the trip," she said. "We got to talk to them and give them T-shirts and thank them for their service. It was great."

Carr, an athletic trainer, said she was inspired by the wounded soldiers she met on a trip to Walter

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STEVE HAYNES/Colby Free Press

Keela Carr (front) and Melissa Ellis walked along U.S. 24 on their way east out of Colby on Friday. Carr's team had to wait until midmorning for the fog to lift before it was safe to continue their journey across the United States.

Briefly

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or who have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverage will be provided. The building is handicapped accessible with an elevator by the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

Church offers free baby stuff

The Colby Wesleyan Church plans a free "Baby Day" from noon to 2 p.m. Tuesday. Parents may come and "shop" for used and new baby items, including toddler and infant clothes, baby food and diapers. Donations of used items are needed. The church is at 320 W. Pine St. in Colby. For information, call Joy Rothfuss at the church, 462-8391.

Massage program offers event

The Therapeutic Massage department at Colby Community College will hold an open house and informational session from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in room 804 of the Health Sciences Building. For information, contact program Director Debra Waites at (785) 460-4797 or debra.waites@colbycc.edu.

Birthing classes open

Couples can still sign up for Citizens Medical Center's childbirth education classes, which will run from 7 to 10 p.m. the next three Thursdays. The staff will catch new couples up on information from the first class. Women who are due to deliver before November are encouraged to attend, along with the support partner. Classes will be held on the hospital campus. The next classes will be in October. For information or to register, contact Jeanene Brown in the center's education department at (785) 460-4850.

run Thursday because the driver will be at a required meeting. Please make other travel arrangements. For information, call the county clerk's office at 460-4500.

Pick some food for Genesis

Remember to bring your nonperishable food donations for the Genesis-Thomas County Food Bank to the Pickin' on the Plains Bluegrass Festival this weekend. Boxes will be placed near the entrance. The schedule kicks off with a potluck supper at 6:30 p.m. Thursday in the 4-H Building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds, and continues Friday to Sunday, July 17-19. For information, call the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643 or (800) 611-8835.

County van to take a holiday

The Thomas County transportation van will not

Picnic in the Park Wednesday

Next week's entertainment at Picnic in the Park will be the Sappa Strings. The series continues at noon every Wednesday through July 29 in Fike Park. For information, call the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 460-3401 or the Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau at 460-7643.

