

## **Additional considerations for the promotion of your rodeo**

*By Steve W. Schroeder*

Most rodeo events in America take place annually, but the presence of your rodeo can be felt year round, if the proper steps are taken. To achieve this type of exposure, your rodeo committees should focus on managing your rodeo as they would manage a brand or a business. Some ideas: Use marketing and business partnerships to enhance your offering and increase awareness of your rodeo; use advertising dollars to maintain your rodeo name in the marketplace; and, finally, use public relations to build credibility with your audience through the media. Always bear in mind what your rodeo is doing to promote the event throughout the year, not just the month preceding the rodeo.

Utilize print, radio, TV and Internet media and speaking engagements to communicate the following as "news":

- Your rodeo association is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization.
- Your rodeo is raising money as a not-for-profit to give to a worthy charitable cause.
- Tell your community about your giving to a worthy charitable cause, giving to children's organizations and scholarships.
- Talk about the countless hours your volunteers give to the production of your rodeo. Point out some of the business leaders or standout volunteers or individuals giving time or talent to the rodeo.
- Talk about your sponsors. · Talk about improvements to the rodeo grounds or donations from local business partnerships to rodeo projects, which can serve to benefit your rodeo as well as the donating business - a winning combination.
- Make an announcement for every new sponsor and ask the sponsor to contact the media and their customers regarding their support of your rodeo.
- Share information on the economic impact your rodeo has on the community.
- Talk about your rodeos commitment to the support of education for the children of your community and/or the support for a school and the promotion of literacy.
- Visit a school and talk to kids about the western lifestyle you love - take a horse to school and give rides to a class with overall good grades. Tell the kids about the sport of rodeo and why it is so much fun - take your Queen to the schools and visit with the children.
- Talk about the history of your rodeo.
- Work with the contestants to make an appearance at a school or a business before or during your rodeo.
- Get an article in every section of the newspaper, (World/Regional, Local, Sports, Life/Arts and Business).
- Get a story on the nightly news in every category of coverage, (News, Sports, Life, Weather, Consumer/Business and Community).

The rodeo event itself provides a wealth of news and information worthy of media attention, including:

- Stories about the contestants, the cowboys and cowgirls.
- Highlighting the local contestants in your rodeo.

- Information about the horses and bulls, the specialty acts, bullfighters, the announcers, the stock contractor and the arena dirt.
- Safety issues for contestants.
- Safety and security for your audience.
- Highlight the veterinarians on call, and discuss the health and welfare of the animals.

As you can see, there are countless ways to promote your rodeo in your region. Again, the publicity chairman/volunteer of your rodeo should be taking advantage of these opportunities year-round.

Finally, remember:

- Your rodeo is not a circus - it is an exciting community event - rich in character, action, human interest and excitement. Promote it that way.
- Success comes by making opportunities for interesting news stories, which translates into free advertising in the media.
- News organizations simply don't want old news or news that matters only to the people directly involved - they want information and stories that will benefit and enrich a large audience.
- The goal is to create your own opportunity and news, communicate to the press and make the most of your success.

Have a great rodeo!

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