

## **Strategic Planning and the PRCA**

Strategic planning for an organization as diverse as the PRCA is a daunting task. To date, there have been some efforts toward developing a strategic plan for the association, but these efforts have not resulted in a final plan.

When the Strategic Planning Council was formed nearly seven years ago, we were asked by the PRCA to look at numerous subjects, from internal and external issues facing the sport to media relations to sponsorship development and branding of the PRCA to strategic planning. As events would unfold, our primary focus came to rest on various issues which could have led to the demise of the PRCA. We exerted a positive impact on identifying and addressing those issues.

Now, with the concurrence and encouragement of the leadership of the PRCA our efforts have turned to strategic planning for professional rodeo. This is in reality the continuation of a process that began with the council in 2004. Our underlying goal all along has been to identify steps necessary to secure the long term sustainability of the sport of rodeo and therefore the long term viability of each of our rodeos. We believe firmly that the ultimate result of our recommendations will be a superior financial model for ALL stakeholders; rodeo committees, contestants, stock contractors, contract personnel and the administrative functions and personnel required to oversee the sport.

The rodeo committees represented on the Strategic Planning Council seek the betterment of professional rodeo. We wish to see a much larger number of rodeo contestants who are able to earn a viable living from the sport. Historically, only 2-3% of the total rodeo contestant population qualifies for the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo and has the opportunity for a positive financial year. Many of even those top performers just manage to break even.

Essentially, the rodeo season never ends for the top contestants. To earn a reasonable living, they must travel to more events and expose themselves to the rigors of both the competition arena and the road for months at a time. Our goal is for the top contestants to be able to compete in a reduced number of events during the “regular rodeo season” and lessen the toll on their bodies so that by the WNFR in late November and early December they are able and ready to compete at the highest levels. The traditional structure and economics of professional rodeo make this virtually impossible.

As the event producers, rodeo committees are under a great deal of financial pressure yet do not have the authority or flexibility to present the sport of rodeo in our individual communities in ways that will maximize positive exposure and ultimately generate a higher level of revenue for the local rodeo committee and in turn, contestants competing at our rodeos. The following recommendations of the Strategic Planning Council are intended not only to assist current rodeo committees and rodeo contestants, but also to aid in the development of new events in communities not currently or historically served by the benefits professional rodeo has to offer. As the sport grows, all facets of the rodeo

business stand to gain; committees, contestants, stock contractors, and contract personnel as well as those who aid in the administration and oversight of the sport. We believe that these recommendations should represent the cornerstone of any strategic plan for the future of the PRCA.

1. The formal divisionalization of both rodeos and contestants is critical. The structure is already pretty much in place. One size does not fit all. This must include a mechanism to progress to a higher level and/or move down to a lesser level.
2. At the outset, each major rodeo as defined by existing or to be developed criteria must have the freedom and flexibility to structure their event in a manner consistent with their own market. Again, a “one size fits all” approach does not work. Approached correctly, we believe this can not only strengthen existing events, but can provide the impetus to attract new events and additional members.
3. Ground rules critical to the production value and marketability of individual rodeos must be allowed. The Wrangler National Finals Rodeo has strict ground rules regarding the production of the event which are duly enforced. Rules regarding being ready when called, back numbers, calf drags and jerk downs, victory laps, etc. are but a few examples. Initially, rodeos in the top tier of all rodeos should be allowed this flexibility.
4. Top level rodeos will develop and adhere to a set of consistent animal welfare policies and procedures and will utilize only those stock contractors who agree to be bound by those policies and procedures. Eventually, the goal is to have all rodeos operating under these policies and procedures.
5. Rodeo committees producing rodeos ranked in the top tier will retain their media/intellectual property rights as they pertain to the electronic distribution of rodeo competition at our events whatever means to include, but not be limited to, terrestrial television broadcasts, cable television broadcasts, satellite broadcasts, Internet streaming, and any manner of broadband distribution now known or that may be known in the future. We want to work in concert with the PRCA toward the objective of creating a Pro Rodeo Network with primary emphasis on “new media” distribution avenues. It is our intent to present not only our own events but the sport of rodeo in only the best light possible and to greatly increase the visibility of the sport.

The rodeo committees who have pledged to support these recommendations have every desire to work with the PRCA in their earliest implementation. Therefore, we have asked Keith Martin to submit them to the PRCA Board of Directors at their February 3, 2011 meeting. We recognize that our recommendations represent significant changes and may require rule and/or bylaw changes. We do however request that deliberations occur with all possible speed and that our recommendations be effective with the 2013 rodeo year.

The following members of the Planning Council participated in an in-depth discussion of these five points and strongly believe in them and support them.

Gary Williams, Tucson Rodeo  
Keith Martin, San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo  
George Combs, Caldwell Night Rodeo  
Craig Andrus, California Rodeo (Salinas)  
Marv Witt, National Western Livestock Show and Rodeo  
Beth Greiner, Justin Boots Championship (Omaha)  
Roger Knutson, Justin Boots Championship (Puyallup)  
Bill Miller, Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo (Colorado Springs)  
Bucky Lamb, Rodeo Austin  
Skip Wagner, Rodeo Houston  
Alan Kingsley, Reno Rodeo

The following members of the Planning Council were not able to attend the meeting but have reviewed the points in question and fully support their implementation.

Tim Hawkins, Pendleton Round-Up  
Rod Hottle, Cheyenne Frontier Days  
Bill Ogg, Greeley Stampede  
Justin Jonas, San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo

The rodeo committees listed above constitute 100% of the current Strategic Planning Council. The Ellensburg Rodeo does not currently have a representative on the Planning Council.

This document has been presented to Keith Martin with the request that he place it on the agenda for the February 3 PRCA Board of Directors meeting. We are available to answer any questions that may arise and stand ready to assist the PRCA in developing the mechanism to implement our proposals.

Thank you.