

★ ★ ★ Scenes from 2025 ★ ★ ★ Champions Ride Match Rodeo



HOTR Rodeo Committee



70th Annual Home On The Range **CHAMPIONS RIDE**

★★★★★ Saddle Bronc Match ★★★★★
at the Open A Angus Arena



2025 Champion
Zac Dallas
on J Bar J's
Hell on Hooves
90 pts



★ ★ ★ BENEFITTING THE BOYS & GIRLS AT FR. CASSEDY'S RANCH ★ ★ ★

AUGUST 1, 2026 1:00pm (MDT)

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~Advertiser Index~

4-Bears Casino & Lodge.....	87	Farmer's Union Oil Co./Cenex.....	18,87	Original Rodeo, LLC.....	33,87
.....inside back cover		Father Nicholas Vetter	78,87	Orwig's OLS Tubs	16,76
Agassiz Seed & Supply	9,87	First International Bank & Trust.....	56,87	Out House Duty.....	76
Agri Insurance, Inc.....	49,87	First State Bank of Golve	24,87	Pahlke Steel, Inc.....	76
AH, Inc.....	52,87	Fisher, Nathan & Nikki.....	76	Pope/Stuber Ranch.....	76
Alaina Stangle Photography.....	25	Flash Printing.....	76,87	Prairie Lumber.....	65
All American Travel.....	55	Fredericks, Casey & Kami	76	PRCA Photography Notice.....	2
Alvin Nelson Tribute	68-69	Fredericks, Susan.....	76	Pump Systems.....	65
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church	57	Fugere Ranch	76	Quale Ranch	87
Amber Waves	59	G Bar G Bronc Saddles	32	inside front cover	
American Legion Post 29.....	17,87	Gjermundson, Connie	53,76	Quality Quick Print.....	55,87
AmericInn Motel & Suites	38	Gooseneck Implement	28,48,87	RDO Equipment Co.....	72,87
Arthaud, Carla.....	25,76,87	Heart River Properties.....	35,87	Red Rock Auto.....	62,83,87
B&B Hot Oil Service.....	15	Heart River Ranch.....	62,80	Red Trail Campground.....	29
Badlands Learning Center	37	High Plains Community Center.....	52,87	Reichert, Pam.....	72
Badlands Pest Management.....	5	High Plains Dental, PC.....	9,87	Reiter Welding, Inc.....	56,87
Baker Boy.....	40,87	High Plains Vet Clinic, Inc.....	74	Riverbank Ranch.....	65,80
Bar JV Angus.....	28,87	Home On The Range staff.....	76	Rodne, Dean & Debbie.....	76
Baranko Companies.....	27,87	HOTR Board of Directors	67	Roers	34
Beach Ambulance	53	HOTR Rodeo Committee.....	2	Rohan Hardware.....	5
Beach Family Clinic "CHI St. Alexis".....	19	Hooked Up Enterprises/Arena Wear.....	60,87	Rosencrans, Dale	76
Beach Pharmacy	5	Howe & Howe.....	70	Roughrider Electric.....	65
Begger's Diamond V Ranch.....	6	Hystad/Madison Ranch.....	76	Roughrider Septic.....	18
Bell Bank	20,87	In Memory Of Joe & Fred Berger.....	87	RTC Networks.....	35,87
Bennett Houglum Agency	27	Jandt Plumbing & Heating.....	76,79	Runnings.....	28,87
Berger Electric.....	65	J.E. Dunn	58,87	Rushmore Mountain Taffy Shop.....	25
Big O Tires.....	54	J Lazy J Ranch.....	76	Sax Motor Company.....	27
Big S Contracting, LLC.....	18,25,74,87	JQ Clothing Co.....	71	Schnell, Larry	20
Bill Smith Award	43	Just-In Glass.....	78,87	Schrivier, Nick	20
Blue Beacon International.....	51,87	Keller Broken Heart Ranch	76	Sheridan, Barney.....	4,62
Boespflug Trailers.....	81	Killdeer Saddle Club.....	76	Silha Funeral Home.....	7
Boots Bar & Grill	65	King's Saddlery	70	Spickler Ranch South	76
Bravera Bank.....	22,87	Klein, Tansey	53	St. John the Baptist Catholic Church.....	75,87
Brooks Chalky Butte Ranch.....	76	LaBelle Family.....	72	St. Mary's of the Assumption Church.....	49,87
Builders First Source.....	83,87	Lassle Ranch Simmentals	6	Steffes Group.....	38,87
Butler Machinery Company	53,87	Legend Auto Body.....	76	Stockmen's Livestock	65,66,76
Calcutta Rules.....	3	Leland Red Angus.....	76	Tee Bench, Inc/Ivan Johnson.....	14,87
Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.....	48,78,87	Lewis, Jim & Penni.....	72	Tescher Fencing.....	8,25
Cereset (Medora).....	78,87	Lillis Electric.....	76	The Arthur Companies.....	7,87
Chad Berger Bucking Bulls.....	65,73,87	Little Missouri Chiropractic, LLC	76	Tosner Haygrinding	80
Chinn Angus.....	76	Little Missouri Saloon Dining	61	Trappers Kettle.....	61,87
Children's Western Wish Foundation.....	32	Lindskov's LT Ranch	60,87	Tri-State Livestock News	40,87
Chord Energy	9,87	Mackoff Kellogg Law Firm.....	7	Tweeten, Robert & Bonnie.....	25,71,87
City of Beach	8	Markwed Excavation, Inc.	81	University of Mary	41,87
CKC Construction & Coatings.....	59,87	Martin Construction.....	82,87	Urlacher Art Works	70
Conoco Phillips.....	31,87	Medalen Angus & Qtr Horse Ranch.....	76	Vesey, Joe & Emily.....	76
Consolidated Communications	61	Medora Boot & Western Wear.....	23,87	Wald Fencing.....	25,74,76
Cowboy Channel.....	31	Medora C Store.....	76	West Plains Inc.....	85
Dacotah Bank	50,87	Meginnes, Matt and Mark.....	25,71,87	Western Ag Network	46,87
Dakota Community Bank.....	29,65,73,87	M'Lord M'Lady.....	5	Western Cooperative Credit Union.....	23,87
Dakota Sports	75	Montana Dakota Scale Service	41,87	Western Frontier Insurance.....	58,87
David Bice Ranch.....	76	MPLX	50,87	Wibaux Coop Oil.....	81
Dickinson Roughrider Commission.....	76	Nelson Livestock Company	6	Wiegand, Joe	65
Dohrmann Cattle Co.....	87	Nelson, Jordan & Tasha	87	Winn Construction.....	8,87
Dressler, Kim & Kelli	72	ND Cowboy Hall of Fame.....	86,87	Wisness Ranch.....	76
DSU Heritage Foundation.....	34,87	ND Energy Services.....	34	Wolff Auctioneers	65
Eagles.....	11,55,67	ND Knights of Columbus.....	25,78	Woody's Feed & Grain	65
Edward H. Schwartz Construction.....	10,87	ND Pharmacy.....	76	Wosepka, James J., P.C.....	9
Ellis, Mark & Shelley.....	72	Northern Ag Network	39,87	Zielke, Riston.....	62
Farm Credit Services of Mandan...25,63,79,87		Obergfell, Ryan.....	72	Zillich, Perry.....	73,87
		Open A Angus.....	65,76,80		



"Under the guidance of the Catholic Church, provide a safe home for all youth who have experienced physical or emotional trauma, where every act is done with love to help them discover the dignity of the human person and learn the skills to manage life's challenges."

Dear Rodeo Fans and Guests,

Welcome to the 70th Annual Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match! Thank you for coming and we hope you enjoy the day because it is going to be exciting!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors and advertisers that help make this event possible. You can read more about the sponsors and advertisers in our commemorative program book. Also, special thanks to our rodeo committee who have been working on this event for the past year. They work hard to make sure each year is better than the previous year.

A special thank you to all the volunteers and staff who are willing to help out today. There are many people who are donating their time to work in the concessions, helping direct traffic and parking, bringing their team and wagon for special guests, or working on the arena. We would not be able to put on an event of this magnitude without them, and their time is greatly appreciated.

It is our privilege to welcome Glee Nett, Executive Director of Children's Western Wish Foundation with us today. Glee will be recognizing an individual with a special gift presentation. You can read more about their mission and presentations at www.CWWF.org.

Other special guests this year include Joe Wiegand, who portrays Teddy Roosevelt. Joe Wiegand is the world's premiere Theodore Roosevelt repressor. As an actor and historian, his portrayals of Theodore Roosevelt have been enjoyed by audiences in all fifty states and internationally. This summer, as we commemorate the opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, we are honored that "Teddy Roosevelt" can be here with us today.

I am also proud to share that the Champions Ride Match is one of four rodeos involved in the Bill Smith "Excellence in Bronc Riding Award." The other rodeos include Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, Jordan Xtreme Broncs and Brad Gjermundson Xtreme Bronc Riding. This prestigious award will go to the cowboy who earns the most money across all four events. Bill Smith was a three-time world champion saddle bronc rider and won the Champions Ride in 1968.

During intermission, make sure to get your friends and family together to participate in our short-go Calcutta. The twelve cowboys with the highest scores will be competing in the short-go round. You bid on the chance that they will win, or place, and then you too, win! We pay 80% and six places, so you have a 50/50 chance of winning some money back. The remaining 20% Calcutta pool money is given to Home On The Range.

We hope you enjoy your day with us, and realize that the Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match is more than just a rodeo. This event helps raise money to support the programs and services for the children we serve. You can read about our programs and our children's testimonials in this program book.

Happy Trails and we hope to see you next year on August 7, 2027!

Laura Feldmann LCSW

Laura Feldmann, LCSW
Executive Director

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A special thank you to
our rodeo committee
for making our
70th Champions Ride
a huge success!

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70th Annual Champions Ride Match

Schedule of Events

1:00 pm Presentation of colors and sponsor flags
 National Anthem - Liza Johnson
 Canadian Anthem - Ashlyn & Kale Williams
 Cowboy Prayer (Father Jarad Wolf)
 Alvin Nelson Long-Go
 Saddle Bronc Riding - 1st Go, 1st Section
 Saddle Bronc Riding - 1st Go, 2nd Section
 Saddle Bronc Riding - 2nd Go, 1st Section
 Saddle Bronc Riding - 2nd Go, 2nd Section
 Long-go Awards presentations
 Intermission
 Children's Western Wish presentation
 Cowboy Calcutta
 Cowboys draw stock
 Stock Bios
 Jim and Tom Tescher Championship Round
 Awards Presentation

PRCA Photography Notice

Livestreaming of any kind, whether through Facebook Live, Periscope or any software sharing similar purposes, is **PROHIBITED**. The PRCA is the sole distributor of any and all rodeo content, and violation will be subject to review and possible legal action.

Only PRCA card/permit-holding photographers and credential media photographers may shoot photos on the rodeo grounds using a professional lens. Fans may take photos from the stands, but only with cell phones and small cameras that have **no extended lens**. Those caught using cameras with a lens attached, will be expelled from the rodeo grounds.

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Original Rodeo, LLC	Rank 45

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Email: heritage@northdakotacowboy.com

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Champions Ride Past Saddle Bronc Winners

1957	Alvin Nelson, Grassy Butte, ND	1991	Ty Murray, Stephenville, TX
1958	George Menkenmaier, Burn, OR	1992	Paul Peterson, Edmund, OK
1959	Duane Howard, Minnewaukan, ND	1993	Brad Gjermundson, Marshall, ND
1960	Marty Wood, Bowness, Alberta, Canada	1994	Craig Latham, Goodwell, OK
1961	Benny Reynolds, Melrose, MT	1995	Rod Hay, Wildwood, Alberta, Canada
	& Pete Fredericks, Halliday, ND	1996	Dan Mortensen, Manhattan, MT
1962	Shawn Davis, Whitehall, MT	1997	Rod Hay, Wildwood, Alberta, Canada
1963	Jim Tescher, Sentinel Butte, ND	1998	Jeremy Crane, Bismarck, ND
1964	Shawn Davis, Whitehall, MT	1999	Rod Hay, Wildwood, Alberta, Canada
1965	Jim Tescher, Sentinel Butte, ND		& Glen O'Neill, Water Valley, Alberta, Canada
1966	Jim Tescher, Sentinel Butte, ND	2000	Glen O'Neill, Water Valley, Alberta, Canada
1967	Hugh Chambliss, Albuquerque, NM	2001	Todd Hipsag, Firth, NE
1968	Bill Smith, Cody, WY	2002	Tom Reeves, Stephenville, TX
1969	Larry Mahan, Salem, OR	2003	Dan Mortensen, Dillon, MT
1970	Ralph Maynard, Eagle Butte, SD	2004	Jesse Bail, Camp Crook, SD
1971	Jim Tescher, Sentinel Butte, ND	2005	Jeremy Crane, Baldwin, ND
1972	Bill Pauley, Miles City, MT	2006	Cody Wright, Milford, UT
1973	Hugh Chambliss, Albuquerque, NM	2007	JJ Elshere, Quinn, SD
1974	Wally Badgett, Kinsey, MT	2008	Cody Wright, Milford, UT
1975	Bill Pauley, Miles City, MT	2009	James Irish, Lewistown, MT
1976	John McBeth, Burden, KS	2010	Wade Sundell, Bayholm, IA
1977	J.C. Bonine, Hysham, MT	2011	Cody Wright, Milford, UT
1978	Bill Pauley, Miles City, MT	2012	Chuck Schmidt, Keldron, SD
1979	Bud Pauley, Miles City, MT	2013	Josh Reynolds, Ekalaka, MT
1980	Bud Pauley, Miles City, MT	2014	Cole Elshere, Faith, SD
1981	Rockie Kukla, Killdeer, ND	2015	Wade Sundell, Colman, OK
1982	Butch Small, Dubois, ID	2016	Zeke Thurston, Big Valley, AB
1983	Chuck Fratzke, Watford City, ND	2017	Allen Boore, Axtell, UT
1984	Rockie Kukla, Killdeer, ND	2018	Allen Boore, Axtell, UT
1985	Harry Rose Jr., Clovis, CA	2019	Wade Sundell, Colman, UT
1986	Lewis Feild, Elk Ridge, UT	2020	Zeke Thurston, Big Valley, AB
1987	Marty Jandreau, Kinnebeck, SD	2021	Brody Cress, Hillsdale, WY
	& Tom Reeves, Eagle Butte, SD	2022	Zeke Thurston, Big Valley, AB
1988	Brad Gjermundson, Marshall, ND	2023	Kolby Wanchuk, Sherwood Park, AB
1989	Robert Etbauer, Goodwell, OK	2024	Brody Cress, Weatherford, TX
1990	Dan Mortensen, Billings, MT	2025	Zac Dallas, Las Cruces, NM

CALCUTTA RULES

We have a Calcutta after the first go round. For those of you not familiar with a Calcutta, it's a live auction of the cowboy's qualifying for the final go round. The payout is 80% and 20% to Champions Ride and it **pays 6 places**. Individuals, groups or businesses can bid on their favorite cowboy and cheer him to be champion, with a chance to win back some money! Bidders will need to pay the secretary at the west-side canopy by the trophy saddle, before the short go round can begin. One social security number is required. If a group is bidding, let us know by coming to the fence or telling a spotter! Payout checks will be dispersed after the rodeo at the HOTR Administration building.

Welcome to the
Home On The Range
Annual Champions Ride



Sentinel Butte Ranch
www.hotrnd.com

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE CHAMPIONS RIDE!
WE WELCOME YOUR CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS
REGARDING THIS EVENT.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

Have you attended the Champions Ride before?

____ Yes, How Many Times? ____ No

How did you hear about the Match?

____ Radio Station _____ Newspaper _____
Station? Which paper?

____ Posters ____ HOTR Ranch Hand ____ ND Tour Guide

____ Facebook ____ Other

What did you like most about the Champions Ride?

RATINGS	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Announcers				
Concessions				
Parking				
Stock				
Cowboys				

We welcome your comments regarding the Champions Ride!

What suggestions could you make regarding the future years of
Champions Ride?

Champions Ride Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pause, mindful of the many blessings You bestow upon us at Home On The Range, and among our friends gathered here today. We ask that You be with us at the Champions Ride 70th year, and we pray that You will guide us in the arena of life. We don't ask for special favors; we don't ask to draw around a chute-fightin' horse, not to break a barrier, or to never be faced with challenges in our day-to-day lives. We do ask, Lord, for safety of the animals and competitors in the arena and for safe travels following today's event.

Help us, Lord, to live our lives in such a manner, that when we make that last inevitable ride to the country up there, where the grass grows lush, green and stirrup high, and the water runs cool, clear and deep, that You, as our Last Judge, will tell us that our entry fees are paid. Amen.



Barney Sheridan is from the small town of Arlee in Western Montana. A resident for over 30 years, Barney is an announcer with the PRCA, announcing many ProRodeos throughout the year from Washington to Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, the Dakotas and of course Montana. This year he will work at more than 20 events and more than 50 performances. Barney says "I Love the fact that you have to travel a long way to see most professional sports, But in ProRodeo... we bring the best in the world, right to your backyard! Barney's wife Tara, daughter Nicolle, and son Cody are all members of the PRCA. Tara and Nicolle are both PRCA Music Directors, and his son Cody Sheridan is a Professional Tie Down Roper. "We all get together for a nice dinner in April, and stay in touch throughout the summer season. Everybody going different directions... gets a little crazy at times".

Barney has announced the Turquoise Circuit Finals in Arizona, has received the Western Heritage Award from The University of Montana, and in January 2017 was honored to receive the Western Heritage Award from The Montana ProRodeo Hall And Wall Of Fame. This is Barney's 9th year of announcing at the Champions Ride Match.

West Plains Inc. is a proud supporter of
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and Home On The Range



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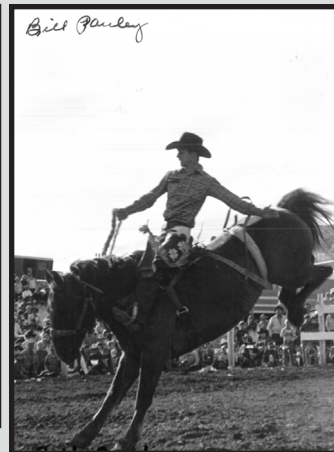
Pictures from seven decades of Champions Ride



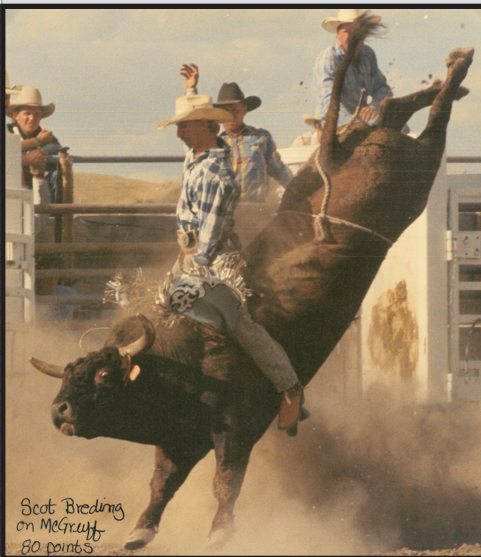
MARK SCHARKE BOYS PRANCH '68'



Brad Paulley on Old Shep - 1981



Brian Paulley

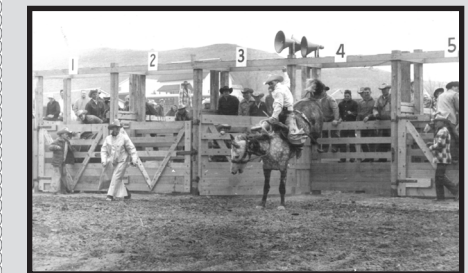
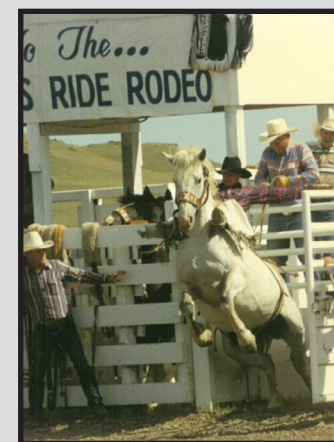


Scott Breding on McGuff 80 points

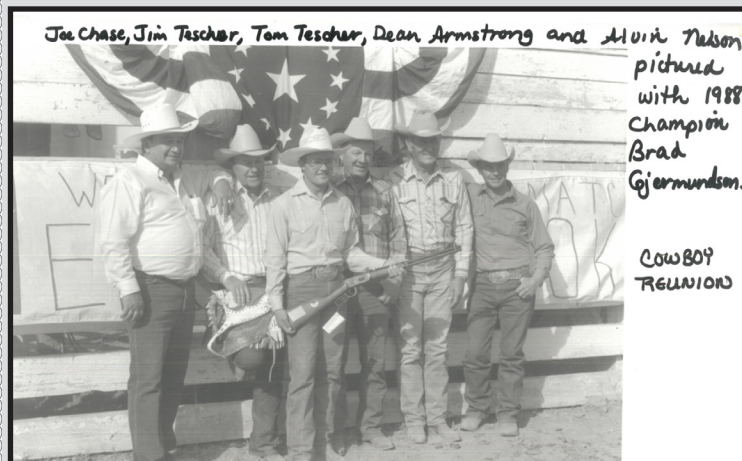


Cowboy Reunion 1988

Rockie Kukula, Dean Armstrong, Joe Chase, Aaron Peaseley, Rex Cook, Clem Piffle, Judding Phillips, C.M. Coffey, Gene Pederson, Tom Tescher, Wally Badgett, Gini Tescher, Alvin Nelson, Gene McCormick and Tex Appleborn.



Final 8 bronc riders



Joe Chase, Jim Tescher, Tom Tescher, Dean Armstrong and Alvin Nelson pictured with 1988 Champion Brad Gjermundson.

Cowboy Reunion



HOME ON THE RANGE CHAMPIONS RIDE

2025 Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Cowboys



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Sale: Wednesday, February 3, 2027

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Bill and Darlene Begger
406-796-2326 Wibaux, MT
darbegger@gmail.com

John and Alicia
Begger 406-956-0151

LRS

LASSLE RANCH SIMMENTALS

LASSLE RANCH SIMMENTALS

Sale: Thursday, February 11, 2027

Annual Bull Sale

Selling 125 Simmental and Sim-Angus Bulls.

Clay and Marianne Lassle
406-486-5584 Glendive, MT
lrsbeef@midrivers.com

Ryan and Sarah Thomson
406-694-3722

NELSON



NELSON LIVESTOCK COMPANY

Sale: Monday, February 8, 2027

Nelson Livestock Company's Production Sale

Selling Simmental, Sim-Angus and Angus Bulls.

Tom and Renee Nelson
406-588-3371 Wibaux, MT
nrcslm@midrivers.com

Brent Nelson: 406-978-2697
Taylen Nelson: 406-853-3620

These bulls are ranch-raised in the same environments that they are bred to work in. Where performance is bred on and not fed on. Yet, they will calve easy, weigh heavy, and be in demand by the cowman and woman that feed the world. Feeders love them, packers pay premiums for them, and the consumer enjoys the great eating experience they produce.



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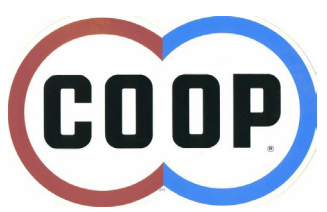
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Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2026 Giving Hearts Day. Home On The Range raised over \$74,000 in donations! We appreciate your support and hope you will participate in Giving Hearts Day 2027, which will be Thursday, February 11, 2027.

Watch our website and Facebook page for details.

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If you donate each month, maybe it's time to consider setting up an automatic donation online. Most people already use automatic payments, e.g. to pay utilities, internet or cell phone service, insurance, etc. So why not set up a safe and secure monthly donation to Home On The Range? It's simple and convenient; no more writing checks, using expensive stamps, or wondering if the check got lost in the mail and the charity received the check. It's all automatic and at the end of the year, you will be sent a summary of the donations.

To become a monthly donor, simply visit our website at www.hotrnd.com, click on Donate Now and select the "monthly donation" option when you sign up. You can enter the amount you wish to give, \$10, \$25, \$100 or any amount you choose. It all adds up and makes a difference. You can set up the donation to be applied to your credit card or deducted from your bank account. It's convenient and hassle-free. You choose the date that works best for you. All the monthly donations add up to support our mission and ensure that we can continue to make a positive impact on our children.

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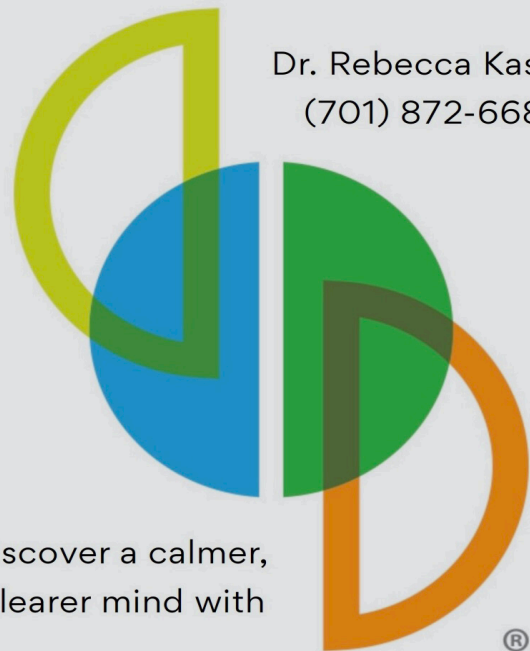
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Resident quotes from therapeutic groups

The best, and most honest reviews of our programs and services come from the people who actually use them - like our youth. Here are some exerts from our youth's journal entries who participate in our animal assisted therapies and quotes from youth who attend school at our Badlands Learning Center.

ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY

(Rhythmic Riding) "Just makes an impact on me and my heart...I just want to make my mark on the world and make something better, because you can make a good impact and you can make a bad impact. And I want my positivity to impact on the world."

"I love my horse, but she needs to listen a little better. So me and her have the same problem. I learned how to take care of something other than myself and that my behavior affects my horse. Also how to think outside the box and that I can make it over any obstacle I chose to."

"This group give me a visualization of hope."

"I like this group because I've become more of myself. And that it shows that I am not afraid to be myself."

"Equine in general has made me realize a lot and reflect on my life. This group is a lot different than any other treatment I've done. I'm the type of person who has to see things and do it, and have something to relate to. That way it makes a lot more sense to me. When I'm doing something that I have to relate back to me I like it a lot more and it's easier for me to realize and put things into perspective."

"I enjoy equine cause it's hands on and it's not out of a 'book'. The answers you give and receive aren't 'canned'. They are personally related to you. It makes me feel better knowing I have to put forth an effort in order to get 'it', and that 'it' comes from me. Not anyone else. Not from a treatment book that people read to you."

"I never really liked myself. I never loved myself. I didn't care about myself and then let other people show me that's really what I was like. They treated me, not like a person. They treated me like something you find on the floor and throw it away. Now, today, I love myself and I care for myself. I care about my future and the people that come into my life."

"What Moose has taught me, what he's brought back, I didn't know I could get back. There's one big thing that he's brought back, and that's my pureness within myself. Because I'm pretty sure there's other girls like me out there that didn't get a chance to give away their pureness freely, and it was taken from them. Moose taught me that I still have it. I still have all of it. That's the biggest gift anybody could give to me."

BADLANDS LEARNING CENTER

"Some advice I would give a new kid here about this school is do your best don't be scared to ask questions and keep working toward your future because this place gives you all the opportunities you just got to take them."

"I love being here at BLC it gave me a fresh start on how I look at things I was just going to become a high school dropout but here life is different they actually want you to ask questions."

"My experience with school before coming to HOTR was awful I hated school. The school at HOTR made a big difference. I graduated with my GED and now want to go to college. There's people here that take their time to help me understand what I'm learning, it's a very peaceful place. It's not a big class that will make you nervous about getting something wrong they just want to see you do your best."

Home On The Range

A corporation under the auspices of the Bismarck Catholic Diocese of western North Dakota, Home On The Range is a licensed residential child care facility. We provide an around-the-clock therapeutic environment for neglected, disadvantaged, unruly, problematic, and delinquent youth. Many residents are victims of abuse, harbor feelings of anger, have had problems in school, or face drug and alcohol addictions. "Under the guidance of the Catholic Church, provide a safe home for all youth who have experienced physical or emotional trauma, where every act is done with love to help them discover the dignity of the human person and learn the skills to manage life's challenges."

Our program offers a caring, safe, and loving environment where youth of all race, creed, religion, and national origin may learn and experience self-worth. Through individually designed treatment plans, residents develop responsible living skills, acknowledging the importance of God, all human beings and His creations.

Home On The Range cares for a total of 26 children at Sentinel Butte, North Dakota. Home On The Range accepts children from states across the nation.

Services to children and families, leadership in the child care field, and the conviction to making a healthier and stronger world, characterize the Home On The Range philosophy. This philosophy is built on a foundation of Christian values and brings healing to families.



A Child's prayer

Give me clean hands, clean words,
clean thoughts.
Help me stand for the hard right against
the easy wrong.

Save me from the habits that harm.
Teach me to work as hard and play as fair in
Thy sight alone as if the world saw.
Forgive me when I am unkind and
help me to forgive those who are
unkind to me.

Keep me ready to help others at some cost
to myself.

Send me chances to do a little good
every day.

And so grow more like Christ.

"Starfish Award"



In honor of our staff who are dedicated to helping our children, we have started the "Starfish Award." Our staff have a challenging job. They form relationships with the children and teach them appropriate behaviors and skills which will help them later in life. After a child graduates from our program, they will be asked which staff made the biggest impression on them. That staff will receive a Starfish Award, which in essence says, "I made a difference in this child's life."

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Adventure Therapy Program

Adventure Therapy is an experiential therapy approach where members are able to work through their trauma-based challenges through outdoor and healthy living activities. It is an effective tool for overcoming a wide range of mental health challenges including (but not limited to): PTSD, substance abuse, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and traumatic life experiences.

This summer we were able to have both girls and boys Adventure Therapy. We continue to engage in hikes, canoe experiences, and activities related to Leave No Trace guidelines. The girls group will spend time in Medora for their capstone trip and the boys group will go to Makoshika Park in Montana for their capstone trip. They plan on tubing on the Little Missouri River. The girls and boys learned how to maintain safety, work through obstacles along the river, and take items needed to travel with only tubes. Throughout group, we hiked, made camp fires, and learned how to cook over a fire. We are working on teaching hiking safety, teamwork skills, and cooking over a fire, as well as experience various hikes and camping. We have also incorporated taking the canine dog with us during hikes as well, which also allows members to work on dog safety and forest preserve rules when it comes to animals and pets.

We'd like to thank all of Home On The Range's supporters for their contributions this last year to the Adventure Therapy program. Your generosity and future support makes Adventure Therapy possible and gives the youth in our care the best opportunities to work through their trauma in new, challenging, and exciting ways!



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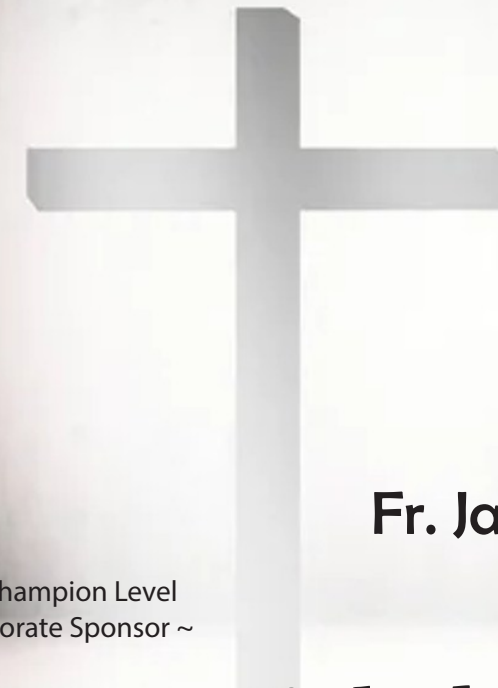
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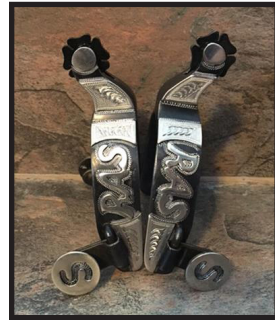
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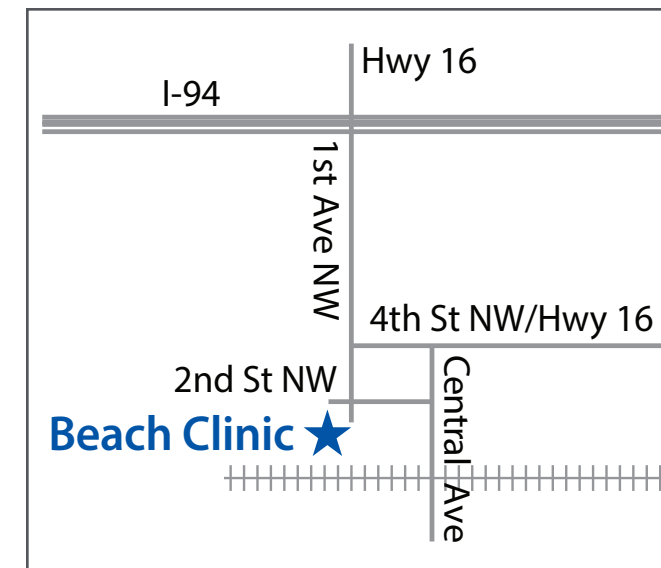
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Rodeo Management and personnel have extensive knowledge and understanding in not only the sport of rodeo, but the livestock industry as well. These people routinely put the needs of the rodeo livestock before their own and have great respect for the animal athletes of rodeo. Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match is proud to be continuing the western way of life and will continue to address issues, especially livestock welfare, with a proactive approach. More information on the Livestock Program of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association can be found at www.prorodeo.com."

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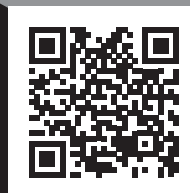


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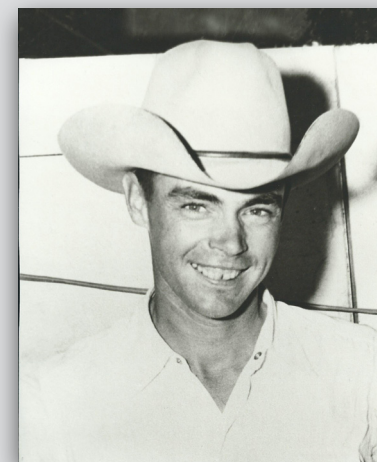
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ALVIN NELSON Changed Saddle Bronc Riding FOREVER!!!



Just who is this Alvin Nelson? The inimitable George Williams – 2008 Rodeo Hall of Fame honoree in Oklahoma City's **National Cowboy Hall of Fame** – is unequivocally the richest source of deeply educated (as in "rode, walked and competed more miles in deep arena dirt") and trustworthy information on everything having to do with rodeo. Listen to these written/published commentaries of George's from 1957, referring to Alvin Nelson as "Ole":

"Starting in '57, January, at Odessa, TX, where the horses really bucked, when the draw went on the wall, and 'Ole' had *Pretty Boy*, I told them of Alvin Nelson, 'Boys, be sure and don't miss this one. It's likely to be the greatest bronc ride you ever saw.' He marked 208, a record I believe 'til yet. 'That summer at Casper, WY, he rode a new horse called *Goodbye Now* that brought 'em from the kitchen. Doyle Cobbler, who flanked him, turned to me and asked, 'What would you have marked his ride?' My jaw hanging slack, I said, 'I was so busy watching that horse buck, I couldn't tell you if he spurred him once.' It was the rankest horse I ever saw anyone make the whistle on. A big stout, fast, ducking, bad headed horse that spun a couple

of rounds and kicked right square out to the side. I didn't see how the saddle stayed on. Jo Weeks of Abilene, TX exclaimed, "That was the best bronc ride I ever saw!"

"Ole' gave them all a hardware bath and you couldn't buck him off. He rode Jake, considered just about unrideable at that time, three times! In Dickinson, ND, Alvin rode a terribly dirty horse that caused Bill Linderman to exclaim, "I'm glad I saw that. That's the most I ever saw anybody spur a horse that was that hard to ride." (George Williams) Not long after hanging the 1957 World Champion Bronc Rider buckle on his belt, Alvin was drafted to the Army. In 1960, barely home from military service, he nearly won the title again! The National Finals Rodeo (NFR) had been born while Alvin was across the pond, wearing Army green. He found it much to his liking – competing there five times, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1964, and 1966 –winning his event average in both 1961 and 1962; plus the Dallas NFR All Around Title in 1961. Yes, you read that right - while Alvin's forte was decidedly bronc riding, he rode barebacks and bulls with a similar flair. His style and control awarded him plenty of winning scores in both.

Alvin's win at New York's legendary Madison Square Garden the fall of 1957 set an all-time record for the most money won at a single bronc riding event... a record that held for an unbelievable 23 years! The North Dakota ranch cowboy's brilliant discovery and pioneer development of "quarter binds" for stirrups on his saddle was a game-changing miracle, revolutionizing bronc riding forever. In retrospect Alvin pondered, "I shouldn't have told my friends - the other saddle bronc riders - about it!" He need not have worried. The bronc riding wizardry Alvin Nelson accomplished in that saddle has yet to be equaled! A couple years ago Kaye and some video experts in North Dakota created a compilation of still photos Alvin had bought from rodeo photographers across his years of competition. Set to music, that video is the epitome of bronc riding perfection...an ethereal dance that should stream on a wall twelve feet tall as moving backdrop to every stage where the Russian Royal Ballet performs - *to enhance their dance!*

When Alvin got tapped off it was excellence, perfection! This slight-built North Dakota ranch cowboy magically transposed the bone-jarring athletic gyrations of bred-to-buck broncs into the flawless supernatural dance of a *centaur!* During his unbelievably lengthy, amazing sports career, Alvin rode saddle broncs professionally from 1957 through 1973...plus making some very memorable, winning bull and bareback conquests. Across that 17-year span he won and placed at all of America's biggest rodeos! Far from ready to leave the arena, Alvin continued team roping into the 1990s, a legacy now perpetuated by his son Louis. A song sung by Bette Midler on a 1990 film soundtrack garnered high musical honors. The world loves, and will never stop singing "*Wind Beneath My Wings*." To me it epitomizes the story of a blonde, beautiful ranch girl wearing a 1957 Miss Rodeo North Dakota crown on her stylish hat at the Cow Palace rodeo in California when Casey Tibbs casually asked her if she'd met Alvin Nelson. Kaye answered, "No, but I would like to." Casey gathered up the shy ranch cowboy and made the introduction that began one of the West's great, decades-long love stories...and that was the moment the wonderful warm wind that never left him first caressed Alvin Nelson's bronc riding wings!

(Written by Rhonda Sterns)

ALVIN NELSON



Alvin on Red Pepper (Vold's) in Ellensburg, WA 1960

1957 WORLD CHAMPION

Resident Testimonials

We are so proud of our boys and girls when they speak in front of groups and share their stories. It takes a lot of courage and confidence. This spring, one of our young ladies was very involved in the spiritual program. Below is her speech and the impact the spiritual groups had on her life.

**Text is taken directly from their written testimonials. Grammar and spelling hasn't been corrected or changed.*

What have I learned about God at Home On The Range:

"A lot. I've learned he has loyal love. Compassion, slow to anger, he is gracious for us, I believe we were meant to live the life we were met to live, meant to make mistakes, it's just like nobody is perfect, and god isn't looking for perfect. It's about the choice you have the make. God looks at your soul, not your body. Jesus is in our soul and hearts, before I had looked for Jesus I had done drugs, likkqa, and so on, to fill the gap in my heart, and yeah, you know, it worked in the moment, but when I was sober and yearning for something unknown. There was something I couldn't describe, when I was coming down from drugs and alcohol, I tried for Jesus and I made that, that one choice. Before my heart was cold, I didn't care what happened to me or others and Id send people out to do MY dirty deeds I was heartless, but, nobody can be like Jesus. But some can be gracious to others for him. And forgave myself. Now I pray "forgive me god my heart was cold." And something you may always have is the temptation to go back, or break relationship once something bad happens in your life or asking god "why?" Something I've always tried to do is was to forgive. Even before God taught me. I appreciate that now I have something to do for it. Matthew 6: 14-15 "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others of their sin your Father will not forgive your sins." How I look at this is. One who sins cannot judge other for the same sins. Judging is Gods job, not ours stay in yo lane. Jesus forgave us. Even though most didn't deserve it. It's the same thing with regular people, everything has been about the same thing, forgiving, loyal love, slow to anger, and being gracious, if you hate, nothing happens to the person you hate if you hate them silently, you're drinking poison, and expecting the other person to be hurt. God doesn't give up on anybody, it's the choice of us choosing to receive what god offers you. he ls in you, "holy spirit" anything you think has been went unseen is seen by god. Nobody is perfect. he's not looking for perfection. Hes looking into the spirit. The good the bad, and the intent. I'm going to give you guys a moment to think about everything you have done with your heart, bad and good. Rejoice and for the bad, pray to be forgiven in your heart, and talk to Jesus, he wants you to talk to him. because he hears you. Praying is the closest thing we have to magic, when I pray time stands still. And I pray others feel that same feeling."

Thoughts on youth group, prayer group, and bible camp:

"I really appreciate, Nathan and Lauren, I can see when Nathan prays he really means it, he feels through it and he's very good at explaining and I'm grateful he can think of all these things to do for us, having his wife their makes the experience feel more truthful and pure, its moments for peace for those who have ears to listen and eyes to see."

PLANNED GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

Planned giving and grants involve gifts for the betterment of life. Benefits range from helping others, to reducing taxes for you. Consult your attorney to determine the best option for you. The following have established such a gift to Home On The Range from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

A&G Foundation Fund
Cliff & Charlotte Bellon Foundation
Barbara Brengle Hilbert
Bruce & Kathy Gonzagowski Estate
Alwin C. Carus Mineral Trust
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ADV-171

Farming

HOTR has 1400 acres and an operating farm and ranch. The children take care of bum lambs or calves, feed cattle and horses, and help load square hay bales.



Eagles Grant Students Scholarships

Each student that successfully completes their program at Home On The Range is eligible for a \$30,000 scholarship from the Eagle Memorial Foundation. This money can be used at a college or trade school of the student's choice.

Thank you to our Board of Directors for their guidance and governing of Home On The Range

Most Reverend Bishop David D. Kagan, *President*

Msg. Gene E. Lindemann, *Vice President*

Rev. Jarad Wolf, *Secretary/Treasurer*

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2024 Rodeo Results

Place	Name	Score of Long Go
1	Zac Dallas	90
2	Isaac Diaz	88
3	Logan Hay	87.5
4/5	Sage Newman	87
4/5	Ryder Wright	87
6	Brody Wells	86
7/8	Weston Patterson	85.5
7/8	Kole Ashbacher	85.5

Place	Name	Score of Short Go
1	Layton Green	89.5
2/3/4	Brody Wells	88
2/3/4	Ryder Wright	88
2/3/4	Kole Ashbacher	88
5	Statler Wright	87.5
6	Logan Hay	86.5
6	Sage Newman	86.5

**Congratulations to our
2025 Champion Zac Dallas
with 175.5 total points!**

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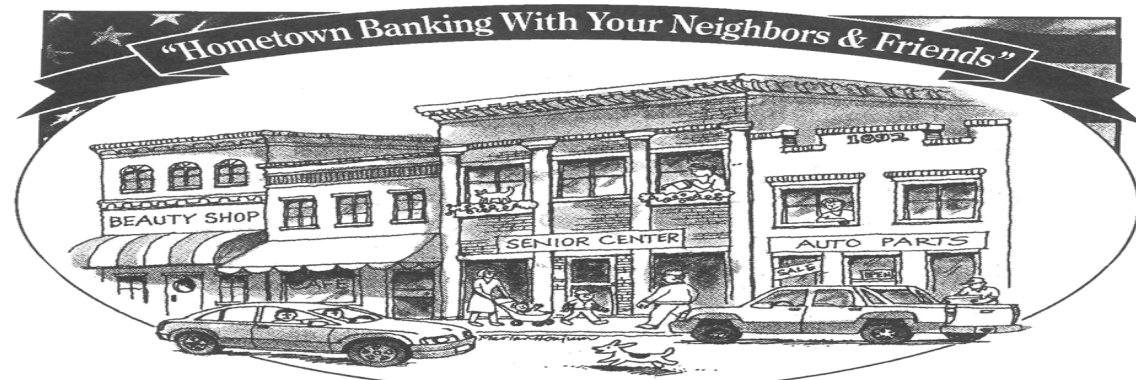
medoraboot.com

HOME ON THE RANGE DRUG & ALCOHOL PROGRAM

Our drug and alcohol program is a combination of abstinence based, non-abstinence based, support group, and education. The platform is a 12-week program with youth who are working on making changes and being able to continue in the support group for as long as they want.

Components of the drug and alcohol program are:

- ~ Stages of Change
- ~ Harm Reduction vs. Abstinence
- ~ Goals
- ~ Pharmacology
- ~ Cues, Triggers, Coping Skills
- ~ Sex Education
- ~ Family History
- ~ Legal Issues/Responsibility
- ~ Co-occurring Disorders
- ~ Strength /Family Support/Connection
- ~ Long Term Plans/Commitment to Change
- ~ Independent Living
- ~ Cultural Differences
- ~ Relapse Prevention



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Joe Wiegand is the world's premiere Theodore Roosevelt reprocessor. As an actor and historian, his portrayals of Theodore Roosevelt have been enjoyed by audiences in all fifty states and internationally.

Joe Wiegand is a political science graduate of The University of the South of Sewanee, Tennessee. Twice elected to head Sewanee's student government, Joe had earlier been elected Governor of the American Legion Illinois Boys State and President of the American Legion Boys Nation programs. Joe served as a graduate assistant at the Center for Government Studies at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, before launching his own business as a political campaign consultant and public policy expert. Joe has been named a Wilkins Scholar, a Harry S. Truman Scholar, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellow. Joe served six years as a member of the DeKalb County, Illinois Board of Commissioners, and was working in public policy and running election campaigns when he began performing as Theodore Roosevelt in 2002.

In 2008, Joe, his wife, Jenny, daughter, Sam, and golden retriever, Faith, traveled across America in celebration of Theodore Roosevelt's 150th birthday and the final centennial year of TR's historic presidency. Performances at the White House and TR's New York City birthplace highlighted the fifty state adventure. Joe has been featured as President Theodore Roosevelt in "The Men Who Built America" on the History Channel, served as the model for the newest TR sculpture at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City,



has a feature role in "National Parks Adventure" an IMAX film about our national parks narrated by Robert Redford.

Today, the Wiegands live in Medora, North Dakota, where Joe works for the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation. Joe is thirty-four year member of Rotary International and a member of the National Association for Interpretation. Joe's annual performance tour is highlighted by appearances in Medora, North Dakota, gateway to Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the home of Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. Visit www.teddyrooseveltschow.com and www.medora.com.

Photo Credit Mark Glenn Studios

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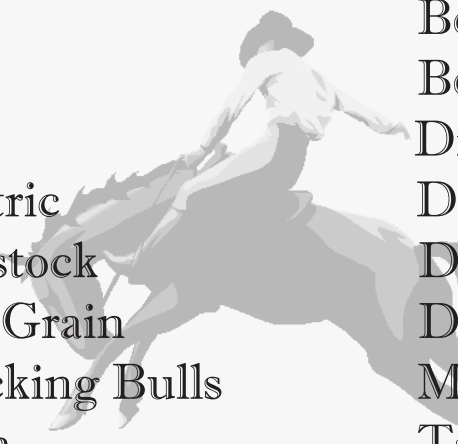
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Honoring Loved Ones

Home On The Range is grateful to all its benefactors and friends who support the programs and services which help neglected and disadvantaged children. A wonderful way to help Home On The Range and honor loved ones is with memorial gifts. A gift may be given in memory of or in honor of a loved one or special friend. It can commemorate a special occasion or holiday or be a memorial in lieu of flowers following a death. We will gladly acknowledge the family of your gift. The honoree's name(s) is listed in our annual commemorative issue of the Ranch Hand. Please feel free to contact the Development Office or use the coupon below.

This is a _____ memorial or _____ honorarium in the name of:

Please send an acknowledgment of this gift to:

(Be sure to include a complete mailing address.)

Thank you!

The residents take a very active role in taking care of the animals at Home On The Range. They feed bum calves, horses, and grain to the cattle.



Thank you to Alaina Stangle 2026 Champions Ride Photographer!



www.alainastanglephoto.com

SHAMROCK PROJECT

Since 1965, the North Dakota Knights of Columbus have been helping Home On The Range through their Shamrock Project. During March, in honor of St. Patrick's Day, councils across the state promote the well-known green chenille Shamrock pins and ask for a free-will donation. This year, many councils participated and over **\$26,000** was raised! Home On The Range is grateful to the Knights, and all who contributed to the annual Shamrock fundraiser!

2026 Miscellaneous Sponsors

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Home On The Range Canine Therapy Program

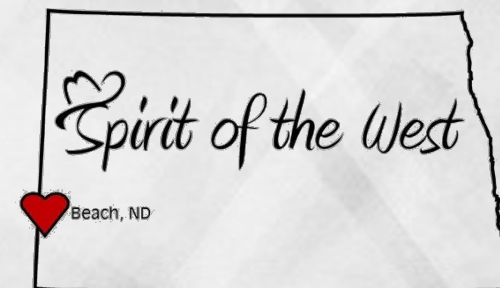
The Home On The Range Canine Program partners with rescue shelters along with neighboring foster homes to assist both dogs and children. The canine program is an 8-week experiential program, teaming residents with dogs to assist residents in building coping skills, self-control, patience, responsibility, and relationship skills. Each week focuses on a different treatment skill such as compassion, communication or team work. Members of the canine program assess each dog. Residents in the canine program learn to identify the needs of their canine partners. They also learn responsibility by taking care of the dogs daily, ensuring that the dogs are fed, watered, exercised, learning the needed skills and living in a safe and clean kennel area. Through their treatment plans, the dogs learn loose leash walking, and they learn basic commands such as sit, down and stay. They also learn how to focus on their handler, along with place and crate training. The dogs learn to overcome fear while residents work with them through agility obstacle courses. Additionally, the dogs learn to trust and bond with their handler. Over the course of the last couple of years, residents in the canine program have helped **26** dogs find forever homes. We currently are working with rescue dogs and local shelters and in the past we were also able to work with K9 crew leader, Joe Fluge's retired explosive detection dog, Shia. Residents worked on active seaches with Shia around campus which was built on helping residents continue to develop their skills mentioned above and also gave them an opportunity to not only work on training dogs to prepare them for adoption, but experience working with a highly trained working detection dog. Graduates from the canine program state that they learn trust while working with the dogs, they love dogs, and learn that dogs want relationships with them. Graduates of the canine program state that the dogs helped them learn patience. One resident stated that he gets stressed easily and that working with the dogs helps him work on controlling his anger. Another resident stated that a session that focused on communication skills was useful for him because "I need to learn how to communicate nice sometimes." A second resident observed that the session on communication helped him to do better in school. Additionally, a resident stated that this group taught her that others can love her because the dogs can love her and that "there will always be a bump in the road and that there is fun and happiness in the world." Finally, a recent youth stated that working with the dogs "keeps me sane."

Finally, we had a beautiful recent adoption success story below. If you have any questions, please contact Brittany Williams at 701-872-3745, ext. 7120. **THANK YOU for all of your support for our loving canines and the youth we serve at HOTR!**

Xena (whose name was Rhea originally) was reunited with her family and is now back home (her original owner when she was a puppy who did not know what happened to her after he rehomed her)! She is happily enjoying her brother and lots of love. This is what her owner is saying about her adoption: "Home On The Range has done an amazing job with Rhea/Xena. She likes to go on walks, she listens well, and she hasn't lost the way she likes to cuddle. They took care of her for about a year, building her up, and making sure she was ready for adoption and luckily I was able to get her back. She goes on daily walks with me and Titan and acts as though she never left. I appreciate Home On The Range for taking her in when I didn't know what happened to her, and for them posting her on Facebook so I could have the opportunity to have this little family back together."



Thank you Spirit of the West for your continued support of the Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match!



www.spiritofthewestfest.com

Spirit of the West is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, formed in 2002, through strategic planning for Beach and the surrounding area. Spirit of the West was created to promote and sustain the Home On The Range rodeo, give local businesses and organizations an opportunity to prosper, and encourage people to visit our area.

2025 Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Champion Zac Dallas



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Holidays



The children get excited about holidays such as Halloween and Christmas.

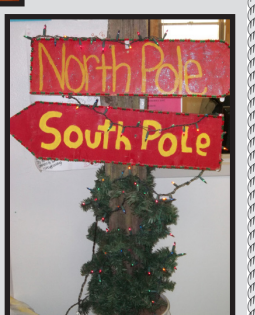
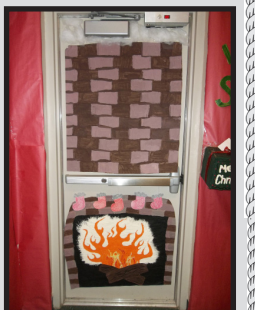


For Halloween, the kids carved pumpkins and put them on display.

During the Christmas season, the kids do seasonal activities. Most of the children were able to go home to their families for

Christmas. For the few that were here over the holidays, Santa came on Christmas morning and handed out Christmas gifts. The children and staff enjoyed a traditional Christmas dinner of turkey and the trimmings.

Once all the kids return from break, we have a New Year's Day party. The kids play lots of different games and win prizes such as liters of pop, games, movies, toys, blankets, footballs, etc. Our children really enjoy this and have a great time!





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The goals of daily recreational activities are to teach youth how to structure free time by having fun, learning new skills, and enhancing self-esteem.

Indoor and outdoor recreational activities, both on- and off-site, offer a variety of organized and leisure-time activities. Some of the activities include basketball, fishing, swimming, bike riding, hiking through the hills of Home On The Range, and barbecues.



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Businesses (C corporations, S corporations, estates, limited liability companies, trusts and financial institutions) that pay state income tax may receive a 49% credit up to a maximum credit of \$10,000 for contributions to a qualified ND endowment. Even better, the unused portion of that tax credit can be carried forward for three years.

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See ND Century Code 57-38-01.21 and 57-35.3 for details.

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Spiritual Program update

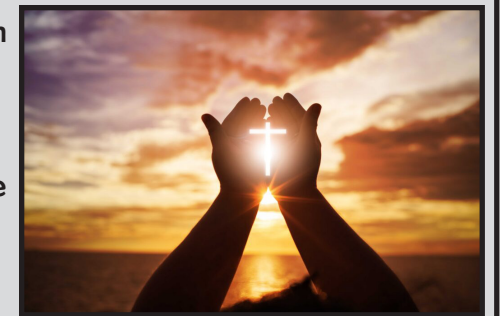
Here at Home On The Range, we continue to be committed to sharing the truth of the Gospel and leading the youth here to Christ. Recently, we had a bible camp that consisted of several fun activities for our youth to participate in. We also brought in guest speakers to lead worship and minister to the youth. One of these speakers spoke about David and the challenges he had to overcome as a youth and a young man so he could accomplish what God was preparing him to do. The speaker encouraged the youth in overcoming their own addictions and turning to Christ and walking through life as men of God. As a result, some of the youth made the decision for the first time, that they wanted to follow Christ. Other youth responded by seeking prayer for their own addiction, generational addiction, and other unique struggles they are currently going through. Would you please join us in prayer as we continue to share the love of Christ with the youth at Home On The Range.

Dear God,

Thank you for being a mighty God, who is greater than any addiction or struggle. Please be with the youth at Home On The Range and bless them. Help them to overcome their own addictions and be the key to breaking generational addiction in their families. Please also help them work through and overcome any other challenges they are facing and help them to recognize You and to desire a personal relationship with You.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.



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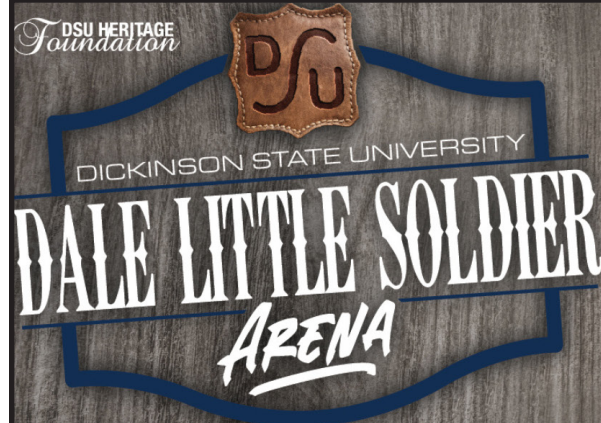


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Home on the Range was honored to serve as the charity of choice for Eagles Dakota State Madam President Janine during her term as President. Through her dedicated efforts, she visited numerous Eagle clubs across the state to raise both funds and awareness for our mission. Her travels and fundraising efforts resulted in a \$5,000 grant and raised more than \$25,000 for the youth we serve.



Pictured above: Laura Feldmann, HOTR Executive Director, DSMP Janine Anderson, and Jolene Obrigewitch, Development Director

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Programming for youth who have experienced sexual exploitation or trafficking

Home On The Range is licensed to care for 26 children, boys and girls ages 12-17 years old. We offer many therapeutic and evidence-based programs to help the children. One of our niche programming is providing specialty programming for the commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC). According to the our records, in 2024, 57% of the females were confirmed or suspected to be CSEC and 57% of the males had concerns of being CSEC.

HOTR collaborates with other nonprofit agencies and service providers to help the CSEC population. We partner with Youthworks, the ND Human Trafficking Navigator, and Rachel Thomas, founder of Ending The Game, to mentor and guide our youth through the treatment and post-treatment process. We have gained statewide attention for this programming. We provide several groups that are evidenced based, or promising practices in working with these youth including groups like Girls Circle, Becoming Me, My Life My Choice, and Ending The Game. We also work with the youth doing experiential work with horses and dogs to work out their relationship issues that they may have experienced. We address their trauma affected brains by doing bottom up programming. This refers to programming that aims to improve youths' abilities to regulate and develop more control over internal operations including heart rate, breathing, and speech rate. By doing this, the youth is better able to regulate their flight, fight and/or flee responses.

For example, we conduct a Rhythmic Riding group that involves the youth riding bareback in a circle to music. Between songs, a brief meditation, relaxation exercise or guided meditation is conducted. The music begins again, and the youth walk their horses in a circle in the opposite direction. The youth are told they have only one job - to make the rhythm of the music, match the rhythm of their body, match the rhythm of their horses. As youth progress in this program, they typically display improvements of stress tolerance, internal regulation and ability to relax, that are evident to the naked eye. The key then, becomes transitioning this skill to staff and adults, peers and other settings outside of the arena.

Some of the other groups include:

- Ending the Game with an equine component
- Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Substance Abuse
- Social Emotional Learning
- Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS) by our trained nurse
- Self Defense
- Trauma Informed Yoga



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Badlands Learning Center update

There's lots of noise and excitement happening at Home On The Range. Even strong winds and rain didn't slow down construction at the Badlands Learning Center, Home On The Range's nonpublic school. The crew is currently working on an addition to the school.

The addition will include two classrooms, offices and bathrooms, an independent living skills center and kitchenette, a sensory room, and a space for outdoor activities and eco groups.

Home On The Range opened Badlands Learning Center in June 2024. The boys and girls take online classes through the Center for Distance Education. The children can take these courses at their own pace, and if they finish a course, they can take additional courses. BLC is a private GED testing site, where students can take GED courses and tests. The school is open year-round and has a flexible schedule. School staff include an Education Director, a special education teacher, and four learning coaches.

Since the school's opening, HOTR has seen tremendous success in the student's academic achievements. In 2025, BLC had 65 students. These students passed 158 total classes for 79 academic credits. Some of the youth worked on their GEDs and passed 27 GED finals, with six students earning their GED diplomas. One hundred percent of students at BLC for 30 days or more, passed at least one class.

Laura Feldmann, HOTR Executive Director, stated, "We are so excited to see construction crews on campus. A year ago, we started talking about the addition and we had no idea how successful and well received it would be. People have really stepped forward and want to be involved. Our residents are excited about having bigger classrooms. It's all been very exciting and rewarding. We appreciate all the support we have received."

Construction will continue all summer and throughout the fall, with a tentative move-in date in January or February 2027. Progress photos and updates will be posted on HOTR's facebook page, just search "Home On The Range." If you would like to support our capital campaign, just send a personal check to Home On The Range with "school" in the memo line, or donate online at www.hotrnd.com.





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Dakota Scramble a Success!

It was a beautiful day at the Pheasant Country Golf Course for the Dakota Scramble. Thirty teams registered to participate in the tournament. At the end of the day, when all the scores were compiled, prizes were awarded to the Hard Luck Team and the winning team. The winning team was Jim Arthaud, Ross Matthews, Joe Griesel and Tom Meyerhoffer, which had -19 par. Plans are underway for the 2027 tournament. Date to be determined.



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Meet Cooper!

Cooper is roughly 6 years old. He is an Italian Greyhound mix. He is up to date with his shots and is neutered. The kids at HOTR are working on crate and place training, the treadmill, healing and loose leash walking, sit, and down, along with a variety of other fun challenges to improve his confidence and focus. He spends some time also in our K9 staff's office during the week. Cooper is a happy dog, and is eager to train and work with the kids. He is great with people and kids, but would prefer to not live with cats, as his instincts kick in and he wants to chase them.

He is available for adoption! If you are interested, please contact Brittany Williams at 701-872-3745, ext. 7120 or by email at brittanyw@hotrnd.com



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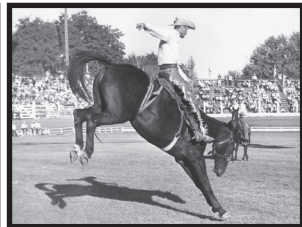
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Jim Tescher 1965



Jim Tescher 1966



Hugh Chambliss 1967



Bill Smith 1968



Larry Mahan 1969



Ralph Maynard 1970



Jim Tescher 1971



Bill Pauley 1972



Hugh Chambliss 1973



Wally Badgett 1974



Bill Pauley 1975



John McBeth 1976



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Bill Pauley 1978



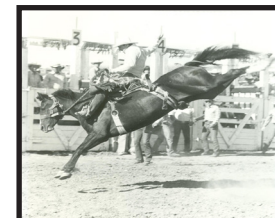
Bud Pauley 1979



Bud Pauley 1980



Rockie Kukla 1981



Butch Small 1982



Chuck Fratzke 1983



Rockie Kukla 1984



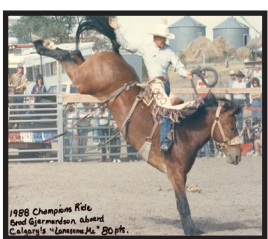
Harry Rose 1985



Lewis Feild 1986



Marty Jandreau 1987
Tom Reeves 1987



Brad Gjermundson 1988



Robert Etbauer 1989



Dan Mortensen 1990



Ty Murray 1991

Excellence in Bronc Riding Award

In 2026, the "Excellence in Bronc Riding Award" will be presented in memory of three-time World Champion Bill Smith, honoring the grit, consistency, and dedication that defined his career.

To be eligible, riders must enter in all four Xtreme Bronc matches:

- Miles City Bucking Horse Sale - May 17th
- Jordan Xtreme Broncs - June 21st
- Home On The Range Champions Ride Rodeo (Sentinel Butte, ND) - August 1st
- Brad Gjermundson Xtreme Bronc Riding (New Town, ND) - October 2nd & 3rd



Riders may be excused from competition in one event in the instance of Visible Injury, and one or more events in instances of Medical (Doctor Release) Injury.

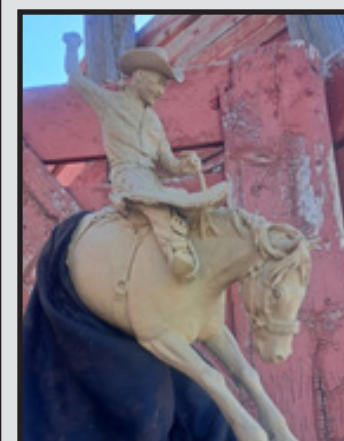
The award will go to the cowboy who earns the most money across all four events - a true measure of performance over time, not just a single ride.

The champion will be presented with a custom bronze trophy commemorating Bill Smith's iconic ride on "Mistake" at Cheyenne Frontier Days - a tribute to one of the sport's greats and the legacy he leaves behind.

This award represents what bronc riding has always been about: Showing up, competing with the best, and seeing it through to the end!

The Bill Smith "Excellence in Bronc Riding Award" will be presented to the winner in October at the Brad Gjermundson Xtreme Bronc Riding.

Bill Smith won the Champions Ride Match in 1968. Ride with purpose. Compete with consistency. Honor the legacy.



Ty Skiver of Skiver Boots is creating the trophy - a shadow box bronze with an engraved leather frame. Smith's wife, Carole, and his brother Rick created this award with Sparky Dreesen and Brad Gjermundson.

One of Bill's favorite pastimes was attending Xtreme Bronc matches. "In later years, his favorite things to go to were the bronc riding, where the young bronc riders would come visit with him," said Carole. Bill Smith was a world champion bronc rider in 1969, 1971, and 1973 and qualified to the National Finals Rodeo

12 times. He was inducted into the PRCA's inaugural Hall of Fame class and recognized in numerous others, including the National Rodeo Hall of Fame, Montana Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, Wyoming Sports Hall of Fame, Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame, and received the prestigious Ben Johnson Award from the National Rodeo Hall of Fame. Smith grew up in Bear Creek, MT. Bill and Carole lived out their years in Thermopolis. Bill passed away June 1, 2025.



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Tom Reeves 2002



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Champions Ride Celebrates Seven Decades of Saddle Bronc Riding

Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match celebrates its 70th anniversary this year! The event was created for two purposes: to showcase the talent of the nation’s best saddle bronc riders as they compete for title and prize money, and to raise funds for Home On The Range’s children and programs. Over the past seven decades, the format has changed many times, but saddle bronc riding has always remained center stage. This is the story of its history and tradition.

HISTORY

It all started in 1957, when local cowboys Jim Tescher and Tom Tescher pitched the idea of a saddle bronc match to Father William Fahnlander as a fundraiser for Home On The Range. Proceeds from the event were earmarked for the organization’s new building fund - its first boys’ dormitory.

Many people stepped forward to help put the event together. Among the key organizers were Ray Schnell, Raymond Schnell, Willard Schnell, Cy Taillon, Alvin Nelson, Ed Doherty, Bill Martin, Harley Roth and Bill Law - just a few of the many who pulled together the stock, personnel and cowboys needed to make it happen. The first rodeo took place in May 1957, and archived newspaper clippings note that Deb Copenhaver built a fire behind the chutes to keep the cowboys warm, since it was so cold; guests parked their cars around the arena to stay warm as well. Tickets were \$2 for adults.

The saddle bronc teams were Tibbs, Lindemann and Copenhaver against Jim Tescher, Tom Tescher and Alvin Nelson. Each rider took on three head, and Alvin Nelson posted the highest combined score to become the first Champion of Champions Ride. The day’s card also included cattle cutting and calf roping, while the boys of Home On The Range showed off their skills in barrel racing and a musical chair race.

TRADITION

The Champions Ride Match changed format in 1977, becoming a full-fledged PRCA (Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association) rodeo, complete with bareback riding, calf roping, steer wrestling, team roping, barrel racing, bull riding, and its main event - saddle bronc riding. Bronc riding stock came from Bob Aber, the Calgary Stampede and Marvin Brookman. Staying true to its roots, the committee crowned J.C. Bonin as champion. Tickets that year were \$4 for adults.

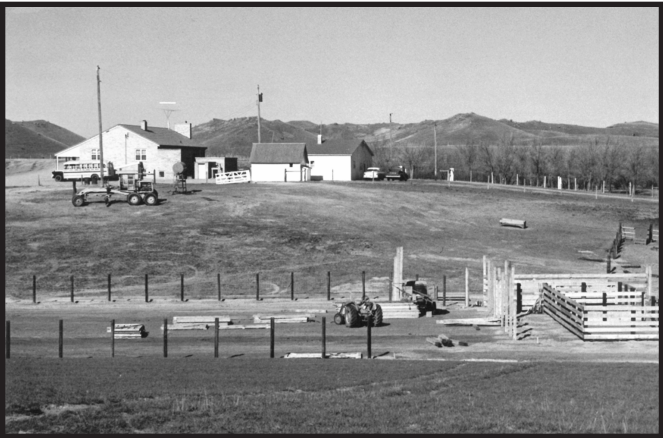
By 1985, Champions Ride had stepped back from PRCA sanctioning to return to its saddle bronc match roots. For years, the primary stock contractors were the Calgary Exhibition, Vern Franklin, Marvin Brookman and Joe Berger, with bull riding and women’s barrel racing rounding out the card between bronc riding events.

Four years later, the format shifted again - this time to broncs and bulls only, a rough-stock rodeo. New and upcoming high school cowboys were invited to compete in bareback riding and bull riding, while saddle bronc riding became an invitation-only event. The rodeo moved to Sunday afternoons, with the Dodge City short-go held the night before - meaning the committee often didn’t know who would compete until Sunday morning.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

With the turn of the century, committee members recognized the need for major changes to keep Champions Ride thriving. One of the first was moving the rodeo from Sunday afternoon to Saturday afternoon. The shift took a few years for fans and cowboys to embrace, but it paid off - there were far fewer Saturday afternoon rodeos competing for attention.

The committee also explored new ways to boost profitability. Corporations and businesses were invited to sponsor chute gates, cowboys and horses at various levels. Some rodeos of this era turned to Calcuttas to raise funds - a form of gaming in which a percentage of the money raised covers operating costs and the rest is paid out to participants. Champions Ride introduced its first Calcutta in



2010, approved by the North Dakota State Gaming Division. One Calcutta is held on Friday, auctioning off the names of cowboys entered in the long-go; a second takes place during Saturday’s intermission, featuring cowboys who qualified for the short-go. Together, these Calcuttas have raised thousands of dollars for Champions Ride.

One of the most significant milestones came in 2016, when the PRCA approved Champions Ride as an Extreme Bronc Event - one of the first single-event rodeos of its kind. The designation meant cowboys’ winnings would count toward their PRCA standings and qualification for the Wrangler National Finals, a major honor that opened the door for similar bronc riding events to earn PRCA sanctioning. It also brought Champions Ride to the Cowboy Channel app, and occasionally the Cowboy Channel itself, giving the event nationwide exposure to a much larger audience of rodeo fans.

Then COVID-19 struck the nation. It did not deter the committee’s determination to keep Champions Ride going. As an outdoor event, the rodeo was able to continue by working closely with local and state health officials and the PRCA, putting special guidelines in place to monitor the health of cowboys, personnel, stock, volunteers and guests. After a long winter of staying home, people welcomed the chance to safely gather again, and attendance still reached 1,400.

JUST A DREAM

Having overcome that obstacle, the committee set its sights on an even bigger dream: a brand-new, permanent arena of steel and pipe, complete with VIP seating above the chutes. At the time it seemed like an enormous undertaking, but when the plan was announced in 2021, support poured in almost immediately. Some attendees made financial contributions and pledges that same day; others signed on as sponsors or donated time, labor and materials. The fundraising effort took off, and immediately after the 2021 rodeo, work crews and volunteers began tearing down the old wooden fence and woven-wire arena. Twelve new chutes were ordered and set on concrete pads, while construction and welding companies built supports for a new crow’s nest and VIP seating. Others welded pipe or set posts, and the North Dakota Fraternal Order of Eagles pledged to raise money for two new concession stands.

By 2023, the new arena was complete - a professional-looking venue wrapped in arena signage along its entire fence line. Attendance reached 1,900 as fans took in the finished product, while the surrounding hillsides remained untouched, preserving the nostalgic, festival-style seating that has defined Champions Ride from the start.

After seven decades, Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match continues to grow while holding fast to its rich history and tradition. It remains the premier saddle bronc match in the Badlands each August, showcasing the talent of PRCA cowboys and broncs - and raising vital funds for Home On The Range.

