

Montana Pro Rodeo Circuit  
Great Falls, MT  
Media Contact:  
Lori Cox  
c) 406.570.6807  
e) lori@818strategy.com

For interview: Matt Neumann  
c) 406.781.1801



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## **CM RUSSELL STAMPEDE RAISES ONE MILLION Goal to Hit of \$1.5M at This Weekend's PRCA Rodeo**

*Great Falls, MT* – This weekend's C.M. Russell Stampede in Stanford, MT will be the last Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo held under the constraints of old lumber and no shade. C.M. Russell Stampede Club President Matt Neumann said a full weekend of activities should bring the club close to their fundraising goal.

“We have raised right at \$1 million,” said Neumann, a full-time school teacher in Stanford. “This weekend is packed with events for our fans and community. Our PRCA rodeo finishes on Sunday and we hope to enter the home stretch on our goal of \$1.5 million for the new arena.”

Neumann itemized a long list of improvements to the Judith Basin County Fairgrounds, home of the Stampede. Phase I includes major seating improvements such as removing wooden bleachers and replacing them with a covered grandstand and standing areas, and moving existing aluminum bleachers to the arena end-caps. “We’ll go from 1,250 seats to about 2,250,” he said.

Demolition begins this fall. Beyond the seating improvements, the Stampede will also build a new crow’s nest to host rodeo announcers and personnel. New VIP seating will be constructed overtop the bucking chutes and all new fencing including arena, pens, chutes, load-in and load-out will replace the old facilities.

Oliver Urick of Stanford noted that the new venue is not just a big deal for Stanford, but all of Central Montana. “It’s a pretty significant impact for the area,” he said. “We’re making a commitment to making this a major annual event for fans. We are looking into expanding the rodeo from one to two days in 2023.” Urick added that the western art auction on Saturday will continue. “It’s a hit!” he stated. Urick and Neumann expect to have their parking area “spruced up” this fall, along with a donor recognition structure built of granite to welcome fans.

Phase II of the project includes new bathrooms, a new concessions stand and continued parking upgrades. “We are all too familiar how these amenities are important to bring up to current standard,” Neumann added. “We want our fans to have the very best experience whether they are local or come from 100 miles away.”

The project has attracted attention of a large anonymous donor, who pledged \$500,000 if matched by friends of the fairgrounds. Funds were also awarded to the group by Montana Tourism for \$80,000.

Donors interested in contributing to the Judith Basin County Fairgrounds Revitalization Project should contact Urick at 406-868-9421 or donate directly through the group's GoFundMe site, found through this Facebook page: @StanfordOpenMT. Updates are available there, including news from Mosaic Architecture and Stahley Engineering, responsible for the project design and build.

Stanford Open is a not-for-profit benefiting communities in Judith Basin County. The C.M. Russell Stampede runs July 15-17 and includes the 56 Cent Breakfast, Bull Run, bike half marathon, family fun run, the Stampede Music Fest, kids stick horse rodeo, a western BBQ, a quick finish art show and art auction. The C.M. Russell Stampede PRCA Rodeo is Sunday, July 17 at 1:30pm. Tickets are \$12 adults; \$8 kids (12 and under). Ticket sales and all Stampede event information can be found at [www.cmrstampede.com](http://www.cmrstampede.com).

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The Montana Pro Rodeo Circuit consists of 33-plus professional rodeos across the state, sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA). Beginning with the NILE PRCA Rodeo in October, the season runs into the next September. The 44<sup>th</sup> annual Circuit Finals will be held at Montana ExpoPark, Great Falls, January 12-14, 2023.