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Lea County Fair and Rodeo
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Carr committed to Lovington rodeo

LOVINGTON, N.M. – It's been nearly 20 years since Pete Carr and his stock contracting firm first arrived in southeastern New Mexico to produce the Lea County Fair and Rodeo.

Over that time, Carr and his team of professionals have proven to be in the upper echelon of livestock producers, and it's a key reason so many of the top names in rodeo make their way to Lovington for the rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 3-Saturday, Aug. 6, at Jake McClure Arena; that also includes Lea County Xtreme Bulls, which is Tuesday, Aug. 2.

“(The stock contractor is) a pretty important role in our rodeo,” said Trey Kerby, vice chairman of the Lea County Fair Board and chairman of the board's rodeo committee. “If you've just got some stock, you're not going to get the big names to show up to your rodeo. That's who our fans come to watch, the best of the best. Anything that can get the best guys and the best girls here is pretty important to us.”

The big names come to Lovington every year. This is a big-money rodeo, and winners often utilize their Lea County Fair and Rodeo earnings to advance on to the National Finals Rodeo. Only the top 15 contestants on the money list in each event at the end of the regular season qualify for the NFR, which takes place in December at Las Vegas.

Bareback rider Richmond Champion won his first Lovington title a year ago with an 88.5-point ride on Carr's Night Bells. With that, the Montana cowboy secured his seventh trip to the NFR and finished the year eighth in the world standings.

Steer wrestler Stockton Graves, who hadn't qualified for the NFR since 2011, utilized his win to earn an eighth trip to ProRodeo's grand finale, while bull rider Creek Young solidified his first NFR bid by winning both the Lea County Xtreme Bulls and the rodeo titles on Carr bulls.

“Pete and his crew are one of the most important parts of our rodeo,” Kerby said. “That's what keeps this rodeo as big as it is, with the big names and the people that come to town. They will travel a long way to do it. They will turn down a rodeo closer to them so they can get on the stock Pete Carr has.”

Members of the fair board have seen it year after year. Whether it's bareback rider Tanner Aus riding 14-time NFR horse Good Time Charlie for 90 points or Koby Radley winning the bull riding on Half Nutz, folks in Lovington have come to expect greatness at their rodeo.

“We're very fortunate to have Pete Carr, partly because he brings some great horses and bulls but also because he's been a great partner for a long time,” said Larry Wheeler, the fair board's chairman. “Pete produces an amazing rodeo for us, and we all work together to make our rodeo the best that it can be.”

From the time the first chute opens during Tuesday's Lea County Xtreme Bulls until the last ride on Saturday night, it's always a rodeo to remember.

“When Pete Carr gets to town, I can relax,” Kerby aid. “They're so good at what they do, and they take their jobs seriously. They work very hard at it.”