



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Lea County Fair and Rodeo
www.LeaCountyFair.net



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Allen's commitment is on giving

LOVINGTON, N.M. – Kris Allen has always known the importance of giving.

It's why he decided to be a firefighter, now retired from the Hobbs Fire Department. It's also why he has agreed to be a member of the Lea County Fair Board, a group of 10 people in charge of operating the Lea County Fair and Rodeo, set for July 29-Aug. 6, at the Lea County Fairgrounds in Lovington

"For me, being a firefighter and serving Hobbs and Lea County all these years, I believe I still serve the Lea County communities," said Allen, who lives in Hobbs and now works for Oxy, an energy company. "I think being on the fair board still gives me the opportunity to give back.

"Putting on something like that, the Lea County Fair and Rodeo is an iconic thing for us every year. It's pretty special to be part of it, organizing the event and working with all the people you get to work with and the people who work in the background."

Allen was raised across the border to the east in Andrews County, Texas. Though he spent his summers working on ranches, he wasn't much into showing at his county fair and more interested in traditional sports. That changed once he was married and started having children.

"We live out in the country, and they like animals," he said. "We raise beef; right now, we're raising longhorns. Over the years, we've raised all sorts of livestock."

He is, after all, at home in Lea County, and being a bit of a rancher is a very southeastern New Mexico thing to do.

As a member of the fair board, Allen is chairman of the buckle committee and a member of the rodeo committee. He and others on the buckle panel make sure there are plenty of buckles for each event that needs one, as well as other trophies that are dished out over the course of the 10-day exposition. In all, they'll hand over 80 buckles and two saddles each year.

"Our job is to make sure all the winners of all those competitions have those and that they're ready to go by fair time," he said.

It's just one of the jobs he takes very seriously. He understands that the exhibitors have taken the time to prepare their exhibits, whether those be from the garden or an animal raised for show. Each person involved deserves the recognition. All three of his girls – Katy, Maddy and Samantha – have all shown, with Samantha still showing. They are, after all, the reason why he got more deeply involved in the fair and rodeo in the first place.

"The best part of the fair, from a dad standpoint and from just being a resident of Lea County, is being able to spend all this time with my kids, watching them grow and prosper," Allen said. "Win or lose, to see them grow and present in the ring with no fear brings me so much pride.

"I've got two grown girls, and I can see where this fair and showing has helped them and where they're headed in life, and I can say I'm proud of that."

As a fair board member, he knows there's something amazing going on in Lea County.

"The county commission and the county employees ... to put on such an event for Lea County residents and all the people pouring in from all over the place means something," he said. "I love

walking around and seeing families together. The last couple of years have been really rough for our county, so it's amazing to see people enjoying themselves.

"That's where I get my sense of pride about what's best for this fair, and that's seeing the family atmosphere. For Lea County putting it on, it's not a revenue thing. It's a giving-back-to-the-community thing."

From grandparents to toddlers to everything in between, there is so much to take in when it's fair time in Lea County.

"What I think makes this fair and rodeo so good is the combination of everything you get out of it," Allen said. "You have the carnival for the kids and the livestock shows and other events for the kids. It's to give them a project to learn something, something about life and the responsibilities that come with it.

"It's more than about gardening in the Yucca building; it gives people a purpose, something to accomplish. As the public gets to come in and view that, they also get some quality entertainment. We've got a great concert series and one of the best rodeos in the country, and this year it's going to be streamed live on TV, because that's how good the rodeo is.

"We've got good entertainment, and it draws a lot of people here. It draws good rodeo athletes. It draws good entertainers. Those entertainers know people are going to show up, and it makes it easier for us to put on a good fair for the county."