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For the Red Bluff Round-Up

EYES ON RED BLUFF

Red Bluff is destination for pro rodeo world

Red Bluff, Calif. (April 17, 2017) – The eyes of the rodeo world are on Red Bluff this week.

That's because the Round-Up, which kicks off Friday night, is the biggest rodeo taking place in the nation this week.

Not only is it the biggest rodeo this week, it's the largest three-day rodeo in the country, with nearly \$250,000 paid out to winning cowboys and cowgirls last year.

Nearly 500 cowboys and cowgirls will make their way to northern California to compete in PRCA rodeo action in seven events: bareback riding, steer wrestling, tie-down roping, saddle bronc riding, team roping, barrel racing, and bull riding.

The Round-Up attracts the biggest names in the rodeo circuit, due to its large purse. The PRCA's 2016 world champions like Levi Simpson and Jeremy Buhler (team roping), Zeke Thurston (saddle bronc riding), Junior Noguera (all-around) and Sage Kimzey (bull riding) will be on hand to compete.

All of the 2016 Round-Up champions return to defend their titles: bareback rider Mason Clements, Santaquin, Utah; steer wrestler Ty Erickson, Helena, Mont.; saddle bronc rider Sam Kelts, Millarville, Alb.; tie-down roper Clint Robinson, Spanish Fork, Utah; team roping header JB James, Jr., Bennett, Colo.; team roping heeler Brock Hanson, Bennett, Colo.; barrel racer Taylor Langdon, Aubrey, Texas, and bull rider Bayle Worden, Charleston, Texas.

Contestants love to come to Red Bluff, and it's not only because of the payout. Round-Up announcer Bob Tallman calls the Round-Up "spring break" for the cowboys, and for those coming from colder climates, the nice weather is welcome. Steer wrestler Billy Bugenig has competed at the Round-Up about fourteen times, and he loves it. "It's usually nice weather," he said, "the sun is out, spring time is here, and everybody's happy."

Bugenig, a steer wrestler from Ferndale, Calif. considers the Round-Up his hometown rodeo. "Even though it's three and a half hours (from home), it's pretty much the closest rodeo to my home. I know a lot of people there." He competed at the Tehama Distr. Fairgrounds in high school rodeo, which makes it more special. "When you're a little kid, it's a big deal and a big rodeo." Bugenig has won money at Red Bluff but has never won a title.

Several local cowboys and cowgirls will compete at the Round-Up: barrel racers Kaillee Hamre, Los Molinos; Angie Hardin, Nellie Miller and Ilea Roquemore, Cottonwood; bareback rider Zack Brown, Red Bluff; and team roper Justin Davis, Cottonwood. Miller is ranked sixth in the

world in the barrel racing; she competed at the 2010 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (WNFR) and is hoping to qualify this year.

Rodeo notables who will be working the rodeo include Hall of Fame announcer Bob Tallman, alongside five-time PRCA Announcer of the Year Wayne Brooks. Bullfighters Dusty Tuckness, who has worked the WNFR eight consecutive years (2009-2016) will work the rodeo, as will Red Bluff resident Eric Layton. Six-time WNFR barrelman and clown John Harrison will provide the comedy.

Five stock contracting companies will bring bucking horses and bulls to Red Bluff. They are Growney Bros. and Bridwell Pro Rodeo, Red Bluff; Four Star Rodeo Co., Cottonwood, Calif.; Flying U/Rosser Rodeo Co., Marysville, Calif.; Calgary Stampede, Calgary, Alberta, and Flying Diamond/Corey and Lange Rodeo, Moses Lake, Wash.

The 96th edition of the Red Bluff Round-Up kicks off Friday night at 7 pm, and is followed by performances on Sat., April 22 at 2:30 pm and Sun., April 23 at 1:30 pm. Tickets range in price from \$14 to \$30 and can be purchased online (RedBluffRoundup.com), at the gate, or at the Round-Up office (530.527.1000). For more information, visit the website.

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Cutline: Last year's bareback riding champion Mason Clements rides at the 2016 Red Bluff Round-Up. He returns, along with seven other 2016 champs, to defend his title at this year's Red Bluff Round-Up. Photo by Hubbell Photography.