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For the Red Bluff Round-Up

MAKING ITS MARK

Red Bluff Round-Up is part of heritage, economy, tradition in the North State

Red Bluff, Calif. (April 16, 2019) – The Red Bluff Round-Up, the nation’s biggest three-day rodeo, came from humble beginnings.

When the West was settled more than a century ago, ranchers and cattlemen and women found entertainment in a likely place: rodeos. Rodeos were a reason to gather, to catch up with friends and family, and for young men to test their mettle against the wild broncs and see how they’d match up against their peers.

The Red Bluff Round-Up came from such origins.

The first recorded round-up in Tehama County was in 1918, held at the A.H. Clough Ranch in the spring. It drew a large crowd and boasted four events: saddle broncs, wild steer riding, bulldogging (steer wrestling), and roping.

The next year, two ranchers near Vina had a bronc riding and roping contest at their ranch. Because of its success, a group of ranchers and businessmen from Red Bluff and Chico decided to organize and put on a regular rodeo. This rodeo was held in 1920 and was called the First Deer Creek Round-Up. About 5,000 people gathered, and in 1921, a spring rodeo was held by the newly formed Northern California Round-Up group. That fall, in October, that group hosted the very first Red Bluff Round-Up.

By 1922, the Red Bluff Round-Up was moved to April, where it has been ever since. The Round-Up was suspended in 1933, due to the Great Depression, and for four years (1942-1945) because of World War II, but when it started again in 1946, it showed a profit of \$6,000, a large sum in those days!

The Round-Up grew as time went on. In 1952, the purse money for the cowboys was \$17,730. The next year, the crowd was standing room only. In 1970, the Round-Up was seen coast to coast, on 200 television stations.

Nowadays, the budget for the round-Up is a multi-million dollar affair, and it boasts a volunteer list in the hundreds. The rodeo, which is part of many events held in Red Bluff during the third week of April, is put on almost totally by volunteers. Those volunteers give of their time because they believe the Round-Up is a worthy cause. The third and fourth generations of some families are involved in the rodeo: board member John Trede, for example, is the fourth generation of his family to volunteer with the Round-Up; he and his wife Lana’s son Destri is now volunteering his time.

Not only is the Round-Up entertainment for the fans, but it's a way to give back to the community. Last year, the Round-Up gave more than \$150,000 to a variety of organizations and groups: from displaced persons due to the Camp Fire, to high school scholarships and young people undergoing treatment for life-threatening diseases.

Rodeo, and the Round-Up, are a reflection of the western lifestyle. The "cowboy way of life" is alive and strong across the nation, and in no place is that more evident than in Northern California. The agriculture world is thriving in Tehama County; more than 42,000 head of cattle were sold in the county last year, and the sales of agricultural goods in the county account for more than \$240,000,000 annually.

The city of Red Bluff and Tehama County look forward to the annual Round-Up. Hotels are full, restaurants are bustling, and vehicles from out of town line up to fill up for fuel. The Round-Up is a boost to the local economy; Tehama County authorities estimate that it bolsters the county in the amount of \$5 million dollars a year.

Now, two years' shy of its centennial, the Round-Up is a tip of the hat to the western lifestyle that still thrives in Tehama County and Northern California. It is an economic boon to the area, a philanthropic outreach to various organizations, and still a form of entertainment: a reason for family and friends to gather, to watch the competition among cowboys and cowgirls across the nation, and to celebrate how California was settled.

The Round-Up will be held April 19-21 at the Tehama District Fairgrounds. Performances begin at 7 pm on April 19, at 2:30 pm on April 20 and at 1:30 pm on April 21. Tickets range in price from \$14 to \$30, with a handling fee, and can be purchased online at www.RedBluffRoundup.com or at the gate. For more information, visit the website or call the Round-Up office at 530.527.1000.

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Cutline: Barrel racer Nellie Williams Miller, Cottonwood, Calif. competes at the 2018 Red Bluff Round-Up. She is the 2017 world champion barrel racer. The Round-Up is a long-standing tradition in Tehama County and the North State. Photo by Hubbell Photos.