



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
One of the newest Main Street Cowboys, Patrick Hendren, left, tapes up signs telling motorists Main Street would be closing on Monday in Pendleton.

YOUNGER: Some think the chartreuse and purple shirts a repellant

Continued from 1A

Adams, also recently recruited to the group, the Main Street Cowboys have a small youth movement following years of trying to diversify an aging membership.

Larry Koehne, a Main Street Cowboys vice president, publicity director, and group historian, said some people think the group's chartreuse and purple Western shirts are a repellent for younger men looking to volunteer.

When the Main Street Cowboys were established in 1950, Koehne said the group adopted the shirt style to stick out amongst the crowds, who dressed in more conservative color palettes than they do now. The shirts were once popular enough that they were sold off the rack at Hame-ly's, but the Main Street Cowboys uniform is now special ordered from a different vendor.

The rest of the Main Street Cowboys history is as colorful as its shirts.

Instead of the family friendly line-up of musicians and performers found on Main Street today, the Main Street Cowboys early downtown shows featured exhibitions like bear wrestling.

And until about 1980, the Main Street Cowboys carried revolvers filled with blanks and might greet a newcomer with a few friendly shots in the air.

The Main Street Cowboys also originally provided bales of hay for seating instead of the familiar benches that now line the streets for parades and other community events. Koehne said the Main Street Cowboys only switched to the

benches after they received complaints from local authorities that mischief makers were setting the bales on fire.

Despite all of its history, Koehne thinks the main reason the Main Street Cowboys ranks have shrunk in recent years is because of an overall decline in volunteerism.

He pointed to the now-defunct local chapter of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, which surrendered its charter and closed its Pendleton lodge as it looks to downsize as evidence that local residents aren't as interested in fraternal organizations as they used to be.

"The benches get heavier as you get older," Koehne joked as the Main Street Cowboys got ready to place the benches along Court, Dorion and Main streets ahead of Saturday's Dress-Up Parade.

For the record, Hendren had a positive spin on the Main Street Cowboys uniform.

"We brighten up the world," he said.

Hendren enjoys the community contribution aspect of being a Cowboy and plunged head first into participating in its activities.

For most of Round-Up week, Hendren will be working the day shift at the "The Greatest Free Show at the West," where he'll help oversee the dozens of vendors and entertainers who will gather on Main Street.

But on Saturday, he's focused on the intersection of Southwest Ninth Street and Dorion Avenue, where he's responsible for staging roughly 20 entries in the Dress-Up Parade.

While he's confirming

that each of the entries is in proper position, a police officer informs him that firefighters from the Bureau of Indian Affairs had arrived in the Bi-Mart parking lot and were looking to be inserted into the line-up.

Hendren promised the BIA group that they would have them slipped in behind the Oregon Department of Forestry entry as soon as the parade started. Despite the mix-up, Hendren said it was much easier to deal with vehicles than horses, who have a much harder time reversing.

Even with all the chaos surrounding him, Hendren maintained his composure and even got some time to socialize with a friend who was dressed as rain cloud for the National Weather Service entry.

And as the parade got started, everything ran pretty smoothly, allowing Hendren to join a group of Main Street Cowboys announcing the parade and handing out awards by the Round-Up Grounds. As the weather service entry rolled by the Main Street Cowboys, the rain cloud sprinkled some water below his costume to look like rain.

Koehne laughed and said he hoped there was good weather for the rest of Round-Up week.

While a week of work lies ahead for Hendren, he seemed to relish it.

"I enjoy every minute of it," he said.

Even though he's set to graduate in June, Hendren said he plans to stick around Pendleton and continue to help out the Main Street Cowboys.

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And until about 1980, the Main Street Cowboys carried revolvers filled with blanks and might greet a newcomer with a few friendly shots in the air.

TICKETS: A hot tourist attraction

Continued from 1A

explaining why the iconic outdoor rodeo keeps drawing more spectators.

"People just want to be here this year," he said. "I think we have a big footprint out there with a social media presence."

Happily, he said, the Round-Up has simply become a hot tourist destination.

"People in general want to experience something authentic, that's intensely relational," Thomas said. "They get here and find a community that's family. When people come here from out of town, they get that experience."

Another indication of the Round-Up's increasing magnetism is the annual Queens' Luncheon. The event, held at the Pendleton Convention Center, hosts visiting royalty who participate in Saturday's Westward Ho! Parade. Last year, the luncheon welcomed about 150 rodeo queens and princesses.

"This year, I have close to 200 people coming," said Karen Vanderplaat, who is in charge of the event.

Among the expected royalty, Vanderplaat said, are 16 state rodeo queens who

will get acquainted over sandwiches, salads and cookies.

Round-Up Director Tiah DeGroff said sponsorships, like ticket sales, are also seeing an upswing.

"For the past three years, we've done about \$20,000-to-\$30,000 more than the year prior," she said. "Each year, we do a little better."

As if that wasn't enough, the weather forecast makes Thomas' mood even more sunny. Temperatures will linger in the upper 60s and low 70s throughout the week. The only hint of rain comes Thursday, but only a 20 percent chance.

"With cool weather, our beverage sales should be really strong," he said.

Not all beverages, he clarified, since water sales rise with the temperature.

Thomas spends a fair amount of time on the phone fielding calls from writers and photographers and others intent on experiencing the Pendleton Round-Up.

"A lot of people want to be a part of it," he said. "It's an iconic Oregon experience."

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Calico Country Designs sees some falloff in business during the Pendleton Round-Up.

BUSINESS: Rooms from \$245 to \$375

Continued from 1A

services, which Calico was handling Monday. Stewart said Calico delivers bouquets throughout the week with the exception of Friday, when the lengthy Westward Ho! Parade rides and rolls through much of the downtown corridor. The parade is as much a staple of Round-Up as the Happy Canyon Night Show or the rodeo arena's grass field, but snarls traffic for a couple of hours.

Still, Stewart stressed, this week is a great time to buy flowers.

The Les Schwab Tire Center was popping as usual for a Monday, but that won't last much longer. Manager Loren Finifrock said as the week moves along and Round-Up picks up, "business slows way down."

Finifrock said the tire center gets out-of-towners who have problems, but many locals are too busy volunteering or taking part in activities this week to otherwise come in.

Yet like Calico, Finifrock said Les

Schwab is open as usual.

Local beer, soda and food vendors see hikes in business this week, along with the hotels, which start taking bookings for next year's Round-Up in the first quarter of the new year.

Most keep lists of Round-Up guests and contact them to arrange their stays. Several hotels in Pendleton reported occupancy nearing 100 percent, particularly for Friday and Saturday nights.

Rooms are running from about \$245 a night to \$375, not including taxes. The prices are often more than double usual rates, and some hotels require a minimum stay of three nights.

Several small business cut back on operations during Round-Up week. Western Auto holds off on appliance deliveries. Zimmerman's True Value on Main closes Friday and Saturday, a practice it established decades ago. Some dental and medical offices shut down all week.

The cinema at Wildhorse Resort & Casino about six miles east of Pendleton stays open but has a dip in attendance.

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Community Fellowship and Westward Ho! Parade

SEPTEMBER 14, 2018

- ◆ **Parade: Downtown Pendleton, Near City Hall @ 10:00 AM**
- ◆ **Community Fellowship: Mount Zion Baptist Church, Pendleton @ 4:00**

PENDLETON ROUND-UP

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