

ROUND-UP RETURNS!

Pendleton Round-Up Queen Josilyn Fullerton waves to the crowd Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021, on her Grand Entry ride around the Pendleton Round-Up Arena. Look for more Round-Up coverage inside and at www.EastOregonian.com.

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Matt Palmer, of Claremore, Oklahoma, puts up an 80-point ride atop Time for Magic during the PRCA Xtreme Bulls Tour Finale on Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021, at the Happy Canyon Arena in Pendleton. Palmer won the finale and says there is not much strategy that goes into riding a bull.

Round-Up plunges forth amid delta variant crisis

By **BRYCE DOLE**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County has reported more than 400 COVID-19 cases for seven consecutive weeks during what many health care workers have called the largest pandemic surge since the pandemic started.

The delta variant crisis has slammed hospitals across the county and state and has caused record-breaking COVID-19 case counts, hospitalizations and deaths since mid-July.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of people are flooding into the county this week for the highly-anticipated Pendleton Round-Up, by far the county's largest annual event.

"We don't want to make national headlines because of a super spreader event," said Umatilla County Public Health Director Joe Fiumara.

County officials are urging attendees to wear masks, maintain distance when possible and not attend the event if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

After months of remaining largely silent on the measures it would take to mitigate the spread of infection, the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon in a post on Facebook said they will "heed all state and local public health mandates and guidelines."

That means volunteers, contractors and staff will be "subject to wear a mask when not actively engaged in the events," the post says. Guests over the age of five are "requested to wear a mask" if they are not having food or beverages.

Masks are required during large outdoor gatherings where distancing is impossible, regardless of vaccine status, per Gov. Kate Brown's statewide mandate.

No proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test will be required to enter the Round-Up Grounds, the organizations said.

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GOING PRO IN RODEO

Making it in the world's most dangerous sport

By **NICK ROSENBERGER**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It's a difficult life to be a cowboy. It's even more difficult to be a professional cowboy competing on the rodeo circuit.

For some, the draw of money and fame bring them into the world of professional rodeos, for others, it's a family tradition. For all, however, it requires an immense amount of time and dedication.

Nearly everyone who makes it in the professional rodeo circuit was raised doing exactly what you see in the arena: throwing ropes around rebellious steers, spurring a horse around the ranch or trying to break a bronc.

"Most rodeo people have family that have done it at some point," said Tom Sorey, who won the Pendleton Round-Up steer-roping title in 1996 and 1999. "I mean, it's not the common sport that people just go to."

But, it's not unheard of for those who don't live on ranches or farms to break into the sport and push to hit that sacred title of "professional." For those competing in roping events, it's definitely doable, Sorey said.

"Anybody can learn it," he said. "It's not that physically demanding, it's just learning all the little things and having the time."

For those interested, they'd need to spend some time on the land, learning from those who have competed previously.

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Sage Steele Kimzey, of Salado, Texas, puts up a 91.5-point ride atop War Cry on Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021 at the PRCA Xtreme Bulls Tour Finale at the Happy Canyon Arena in Pendleton.

Pendleton Round-Up gets its pink on

Tough Enough to Wear Pink raises money, awareness for cancer patients, survivors

By **ERICK PETERSON**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Blue denim jeans and Western shirts are the style every Pendleton Round-Up, but on Thursday, Sept. 16, one color will dominate the scene: pink.

Tough Enough to Wear Pink Day is now in its 15th year at the Round-Up. The event, a fundraiser for local cancer patients, also seeks to raise cancer awareness.

Anyone who is not wearing pink at the Round-Up on Thursday might look a bit out of place. Even the cowboys will be wearing pink.

People might even ask such people, "Are you tough enough to wear pink?"

"This is a big deal," said Casey White-Zollman, Pendleton Round-Up TETWP co-chair with Jill Gregg. White-Zollman has helped with the event since 2014.

Last year should have been the 15th anniversary for the event, but it was canceled with the rest of the Round-Up. Since it started at the Round-Up in 2005, TETWP has roped in nearly \$300,000, according to White-Zollman.

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Rodeo fans, many clad in pink, fill the stands for Tough Enough to Wear Pink on Sept. 12, 2019, at the Pendleton Round-Up.



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