

# Rodeo prepares to move

By **JADE McDOWELL**

Staff Writer

In his heyday, David Bothum used to ride 100 rodeos a year, but his favorite arena has always been the one at home.

“These are by far the prettiest grounds,” he said, gesturing to the emerald green grass and carefully trimmed shade trees creating a stark contrast to the hoof-marked mud of the arena. “For the spectators, behind the stands, there’s not a prettier place.”

There’s a lot to love about the arena in the center of Hermiston that has been the home of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo since its inception. But spectators and cowboys alike will say their farewells to it this year before the rodeo and Umatilla County Fair move to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in 2016.

Bothum, a founding member of the rodeo who represents it on the EOTEC board, has worked hard to make sure the new arena will be a good fit for the Farm-City Pro Rodeo. He said the new arena will seat more people — close to 8,000 compared to about 5,500 currently — but it will preserve the overall lay-

STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Jeff Schwirse installs some lighting behind the Farm-City logo sign on the rodeo grounds. Schwirse has been the electrician for the Farm-City Pro Rodeo for about five years.



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Front row L-R: Mike Fine, Becky Hayden-Madrigal, Richard Hayden, Tess Sabuco, Nikole Green, Joey Gutierrez  
Back Row L-R: Mike Atkins, Brayann Mendoza, Nick Gutierrez, Scott Bishop, Jeff Pedersen, Brian VanCleave

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