

Contact: Johna Cravens
580-235-2664
johna@cowgirlimaging.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mandan Rodeo Days Named 2014 North Dakota Tourism Event of the Year

FARGO, N.D. (April 19, 2014) – The Mandan Rodeo Days Celebration received statewide recognition at the 2014 North Dakota Tourism Conference in Fargo on April 16.

North Dakota governor Jack Dalrymple presented the Mandan Rodeo Days Celebration with the Governor's Travel and Tourism Event of the Year award for 2014. The three-day event, held around the July Fourth holiday, marks its 135th anniversary this year. More than 25,000 people annually attend the celebration, which is a true family experience, rich in western history and tradition.

"Tourism is one of North Dakota's largest industries and an important contributor to our growing economy," Gov. Jack Dalrymple said. "The leaders recognized today are key reasons why visitors enjoy legendary experiences when they come to North Dakota. Congratulations to this year's award recipients, and thank you to all those who work hard to make North Dakota's tourism industry so successful."

The PRCA rodeo, North Dakota's largest regular-season pro rodeo, provides a taste of the state's western culture. The celebration's wide variety of activities are designed to keep both kids and adults entertained. Children's activities include dummy roping, stick horse racing, a doll and pet parade, covered wagon rides, the carnival, and more.

The Art in the Park Festival, held July 3 and 4, features more than 135 art and crafts booth, along with approximately 30 food vendors. The three-day celebration concludes on July Fourth with a 170-unit parade, a 5K walk and run, a golf tournament, baseball games and a gigantic fireworks display after the final rodeo performance. Mandan Rodeo Days has received numerous awards both

locally and nationally and has raised more than \$40,000 over the last three years for the Wounded Warrior Project.

“We feel very fortunate to win an award of this stature,” said Mandan rodeo committee president Bruce Schirado. “It is an honor to receive this award, but it would not be possible if it wasn’t for the many hours of dedication from volunteers, sponsors and committee members. It is very rewarding and gratifying to see that it doesn’t go unnoticed.”

Other 2014 Governor’s Tourism Award recipients were Don & Pat Demars of Grand Forks, N.D., *Behind the Scenes Tourism Employees*; Gabriel Mejia, Staybridge Suites Hotel, Minot, N.D., *Front-line Tourism Employee*; and Fort Buford State Historic Site/Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center, near Williston, N.D., *Tourist Attraction of the Year*.

As one of North Dakota’s leading industries, tourism attracts visitors to more than 640 attractions, 357 events and festivals, and 850 lodging options. In addition, more than 33,000 jobs in North Dakota are attributed to this industry.

The 135th Mandan Rodeo Days Celebration, highlighted by the Mandan PRCA Rodeo, will join North Dakota’s 125th anniversary of statehood celebration on Wednesday, July 2, through Friday, July 4, 2014.

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Caption for attached photo:

Al Anderson of the North Dakota Department of Commerce (center) presents the 2014 Governor’s Travel and Tourism Event of the Year to Neil Ness (left), past president of the Mandan rodeo committee and Bruce Schirado (right), current president. Mandan Rodeo Days celebrates its 135th anniversary July 2-4, 2014.



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