

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MANDAN, N.D. (June 1, 2016) Thrills and spills, fireworks and fun help make the 137th annual Mandan Rodeo Days one of North America's great western events, as designated earlier this year by *American Cowboy* magazine. This year's edition, July 2-4, features everything fans expect plus, several new twists.

Mandan Rodeo Days, presented by Dakota Community Bank & Trust, is North Dakota's largest regular season Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA), drawing many top cowboys and cowgirls from the Badlands Circuit and beyond to rope, ride and race for more than \$100,000. Dakota Rodeo Co, with Mandan's Chad Berger and partner Joe Simon at the helm, will bring award-winning bucking horses and bulls to challenge the cowboys.

Featured specialty performer Kyzer Stoddard, with his daredevil trick and roman riding, and rodeo clown Matt Merritt will both make their Mandan debuts. All three performances will feature the ever-popular mutton busting for children age six and under and the heart-stopping chuck wagon races.

New this year is a demonstration of one of the fastest-growing western sports - mounted shooting - on July 3. Plus, on July 4 the rodeo will feature "A Tribute to the Six Pack Match Bronc Riding." The event, which will match six champion saddle bronc riders, honors the North Dakota Six Pack cowboys who dominated bronc riding in the late 1950s and early 1960s - Jim Tescher, Alvin Nelson, Duane Howard, Tom Tescher, Joe Chase and Dean Armstrong.

Another addition for 2016 is the first Mandan Rodeo Days Remarkable Kids Rodeo, scheduled for 2:30 p.m. on July 2 in the Mandan Horse & Saddle Club arena at Dacotah Centennial Park. Participation is limited to 30 remarkable kids, ages 5-12 with special needs. Pre-registration is required by contacting occupational and hippotherapist Brittany Schock at 701-220-9310 or hippkidstherapy@gmail.com by June 30.

Advance general-admission tickets are on sale now at all Petro Serve USA locations in Mandan and Bismarck. Tickets are also available Butcher Block Meats, Dan's Supermarket and the Mandan Progress Organization in Mandan, plus both Boot Barn stores, Country Soule and

Western Unlimited in Bismarck. A limited number of reserved seats are available for \$22 each through July 1, only at the Petro-Serve USA at 1300 E. Main in Mandan.

The advance general admission tickets are \$2 less than those bought at the gate for adults and \$1 less for children six to 12. Children under six are free when accompanied by an adult with a ticket.

Rodeo week is full of activities for the whole family with the three 7:30 p.m. rodeo performances serving as the centerpiece. Family Night, July 2, begins with free hotdogs and plenty of children's activities, including the "Dress Like A Rodeo Clown Contest." On Family Night, patrons get a \$2 discount on each child's ticket when accompanied by a paying adult.

July 3 is Patriot Night, saluting America's military and veterans. "We'd like everyone to wear red, white and blue that night and help us honor our military," said Patriot night co-chair Trish Hulm. This year's rodeo is raising money for K9s For Warriors, whose motto is "give a new leash on life" for a rescue dog and a military hero.

Activities include a raffle for two rifles and a diamond necklace, plus a live and silent auction. Only 1,200 raffle tickets will be sold at \$20 each. They may be purchased at several area locations and from committee members.

Public fireworks displays follow the rodeo July 3 and 4. The July 4 fireworks display is North Dakota's largest. In 2016, non-commercial fireworks are banned at Dacotah Centennial Park by the City of Mandan. The ban was introduced to protect the safety of rodeo contestants, animals and the public.

The Art in the Park Festival, July 3 and 4, includes more than 135 art and crafts booths, food vendors and live entertainment. The celebration concludes on July Fourth with a 170-unit parade, a 5K run and North Dakota's largest fireworks display after the final rodeo performance.

For a complete schedule and more information about this year's Mandan Rodeo Days celebration, visit MandanRodeo.com.

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Cutline for photo attached: Thrills and spills help make Mandan Rodeo Days, which returns for its 137th year July 2-4, one of North America's top western events. Photo by Jackie Jensen.