

****PRESS RELEASE****

June 24, 2024, 10:30am

Lincoln County Fair Association Holding Smokey Bear Stampede to
Benefit Victims of the South Fork and Salt Fires

The Lincoln County Fair Association (“LCFA”) is a New Mexico domestic non-profit corporation since March 17, 1960, for promotion of agriculture/youth of Lincoln County. The Lincoln County Fair, first held in 1953, provides the citizens and more importantly the youth of Lincoln County, an opportunity to exhibit their handiwork and for the youth of the county to spend the year selecting, raising and preparing livestock, for the livestock auction held at the end of the fair which helps many youth add to their college funds, receive scholarships and provides many local businesses the opportunity invest in the youth of Lincoln County. LCFA is a private organization that contracts with the county to manage the fairgrounds. It consists of local volunteers that each put in hundreds of volunteer hours annually to benefit youth of Lincoln County, without compensation. Since the Smokey Bear Stampede cancellation during Covid we have been fortunate enough to garner your support through the community in sponsorships, our Holiday Extravaganza fundraiser, and the Lincoln County Cowboy Crisis Fund to have the ability to weather a net loss during the Stampede and to donate to those directly impacted by the fire, and still complete our mission of hosting the Lincoln County Fair for our 4-H & FFA youth.

The Smokey Bear Stampede is the keystone event for Lincoln County where the residents celebrate the 4th of July, support economic stimulus in the county and it is the primary means of funding the County Fair. LCFA will hold the 68th Annual Smokey Bear Stampede as scheduled. Lincoln County has suffered a tremendous tragedy and as residents of the county, each member of LCFA has felt that loss either personally or through friends and loved ones. The Board of LCFA has contemplated greatly what is best and determined that we can best support our community by holding the Stampede and give the citizens of the county an event to attend that is positive and entertaining. We believe this county is strong and can come together to rebuild and we would like to offer an event that lends entertainment and positivity to those efforts.

We have made changes to the usual production of the Stampede to benefit the county by greatly reducing the fees to attend. The first day of the Stampede will be FREE. July 3rd events will have no charge for attendance. The regular admission of \$12 for the remainder of events is reduced to \$5! LCFA is initiating a fundraising campaign throughout the Stampede that will seek donations for the victims and families affected by the fires. All donations received during the Stampede will be matched by the LCFA Lincoln County Cowboy Crisis Fund, up to \$20,000. Our goal is to provide a combined LCFA donation and raised donations of \$40,000 to directly benefit the victims and families in need at the end of the Stampede. This fund, now in its 17th year, was started as a benefit effort to assist a Lincoln County Deputy Sheriff who was shot in the line of duty. At the insistence of that deputy, we turned this fundraising effort into an annual fundraising event held Labor Day

weekend called the LCFA Benefit Ranch Rodeo. The fund has raised over \$100,000 for families in need during medical crisis.

Lastly, the Mayor of Ruidoso has opened up portions of the community for residents to begin returning. The Racetrack is moving forward with the races, slowly but surely this community will attempt to come back, and we want to support that without putting any additional pressures on the community. LCFA has communicated with the Mayor of Ruidoso, Mayor of Capitan, and County officials and will continue to do so moving forward. LCFA will work with local governments and agencies as we work out the finer details to have the largest impact on fire recovery & victim relief funding. We are working to minimize impacts on local resources and emergency response through collaboration with adjoining counties, as well as, in coordination with Lincoln County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the Red Cross to continue to accommodate people, dry goods and animals housed at the fairgrounds. We have discussed ongoing access and facility use with these agencies for storage of provisions and housing of evacuees and animals as well as traffic management for their services during the Stampede. The rodeo will not impact any services being provided at the fairgrounds. According to surveys we have done historically, very few contestants or spectators that attend the stampede stay in hotels or cabins (less than 30%). We have considered this potential impact on the community and determined that given the national news attention the fires have gotten, those attendees of the Stampede that would typically be seeking lodging, would realize it would not be available this year and make other arrangements.

It is our intention to provide this greatly reduced in price entertainment option to the residents without impacting any relief efforts and resources. We hope that our intentions are made clear here; that we want to be a part of #RuidosoStrong by going forward with this event and celebrating the strength and tenacity of our community and providing us a place to come together and celebrate the 4th of July as a community. Lincoln County....LET'S RODEO!

For donations or information please contact LCFA at:

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