

INFORMATION



BRP 



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ABOUT US

MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of Big Rodeo Project Rodeo is to promote tourism in Greenville, Mississippi, by organizing traditional rodeos and community events that honor local heritage and support meaningful causes."

BRP Rodeo (Big Rodeo Project Rodeo) hosts the Annual Greenville Heritage Rodeo. In addition to traditional rodeos, BRP serves as the coordinator for the College Day & Career Fair Rodeo Exhibition (CD&CFRE) and the Cure Cancer Trail Ride (CCTR). The 100 Black Men of Grenada CD&RE event is a free rodeo exhibition that attracts and engages students with colleges, businesses, career professionals, motivational speakers, and entrepreneurs. CCTR raises cancer awareness and funds for the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation.

BRP-RODEO, LLC, a for-profit organization established in 2016, is dedicated to preserving the sport of rodeo through youth education and event promotions. Our business model emphasizes continuous support and improvement of local communities through collaborations with partnerships, sponsorships, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, the military, and private businesses. Our board of advisors comprises seasoned professionals in various career facets, including individuals with years of experience in the rodeo business. The executive officers and advisory board members are as follows:

Advisory Board:

Senior Advisor – Okmulgee Rodeo
Retired Secretary
Marcous Friday – Friday’s Productions/Okmulgee
Rodeo Announcer
Jovar McKellar – JCM Enterprises/ Military retiree
Tanya Carter – News Anchor
Jennifer Adams-Williams, Esq. -Adams Law Office
Dr. Annie Powell-Williams – APW Enterprises

Ex Executive Officers:

President and Co-Founder
James Hardiman Jr.

Junior CEO
Kaiuma Wolfe

Co-Founder
Dr. Annie Powell-Williams

Committees:

Military

Chairman – James Hardiman
Member – Jovar McKellar
Member – Jerome Tidwell
Member – Cora Kincaid

Marketing

Chairman – James Hardiman
Member – Tanya Carter
Member – Regina Hawkins

Production

Chairman – James Hardiman
Member -- Marcous Friday
Member – Archie
Member – Diamond McNutley
Member – Kimberly Whyne

BRP-Rodeo LLC rodeo event promotions, experience it for yourself!



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CONTACTS

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HISTORY

The First Annual Greenville Heritage Rodeo

James Hardiman Jr. initially declined a request from a rodeo promoter to help make an existing rodeo sustainable, citing his lack of knowledge of the rodeo business. However, upon reflection, he had a change of heart, recalling his childhood desire to compete as a bronc rider—an ambition hindered by racial barriers at the only known local rodeo arena in Elliott, Mississippi.

James vividly remembered pleading with his grandfather, Gus Hardiman, to showcase his horsemanship skills as they traveled past the arena. His grandfather’s consistent response reflected the reality of racial segregation at the time: “That rodeo is only for white people, so we can’t go in there because of our skin color.” Despite these obstacles, James developed a deep love for riding and breaking horses while growing up in the Camp McCain area on approximately 200 acres of land passed down from his great-grandmother, Alice Taylor-Hardiman, as a farm and cattle ranch.

He actively participated in riding and assisting his grandfather in training various animals, including horses, mules, and Shetland ponies. Among them, his most cherished companion was a black stallion named Jerusalem, and his first Shetland ponies were Trigger and Silver. The team also included mules named Old Blue, Dolly, and Gray, which were used for logging, pulpwood operations, and pulling farm equipment.

James’s inventive spirit became evident when he was given a toy metal frame spring horse designed only for stationary bouncing. After repeatedly moving the toy around the yard as if it were a real horse, his grandfather realized that James needed an actual horse, marking a pivotal moment in his equine journey.

James later invited the rodeo promoter to a Black-Owned Business Think Tank (BOB Think Tank) meeting to present the idea of a sustainable rodeo. Two members, including Dr. Annie Powell-Williams, expressed interest and invited the promoter to strategize about the project. During this meeting, Dr. Annie and the promoter asked James to serve as President of the newly formed rodeo business, as the promoter lacked funding and sought a partnership.

Dr. Annie and James agreed to partner temporarily to provide business consulting and help build a sustainable model. BRP Rodeo then created the Annual Greenville Heritage Rodeo, with the first event taking place on January 13–14, 2017.

The Greenville Annual Heritage Rodeo also coordinates two nonprofit events: the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation’s “Cure Cancer Trail Ride” and the 100 Black Men of Grenada’s “College Day and Career Fair Rodeo Exhibition.”

Additionally, after the 1st Annual Greenville Heritage Rodeo, the rodeo promoter—who was a co-founder of BRP-Rodeo, LLC—voluntarily withdrew from the company and returned to a previously established rodeo organization.



Animal Welfare Statement

Humane treatment of professional rodeo animals in and out of the arena is a fact well-documented by veterinarians and research studies. Professional rodeo rules successfully so protect animals and the American Veterinary Medical Association recognizes professional rodeo guidelines in its position statement on the welfare of animals in spectator events. **Coggins testing and CVI health certificates are required for each horse, before being unloaded, as proof the horse is certifiably free of infectious diseases.**

BRP-RODEO staff, contestants, and contractors go to great lengths to ensure the proper care, handling, and treatment of all animals involved in BRP-RODEO events. Professional rodeo animals appear to enjoy their work, according to many large animal experts. Like a well-conditioned athlete, an animal can perform only if it is healthy. Any cowboy or cowgirl will tell you he or she takes home a paycheck only when the animal is in top form.

Stock contractors, the ranchers who raise rodeo stock for a living, also have an obvious financial interest in keeping the animals healthy. Abuse of animals expected to perform in BRP-RODEO productions is unacceptable. The livestock is the rodeo and the rodeo is a way of making a living for stock contractors and all of the staff and stock contractors held accountable. BRP RODEO stock contractors and staff take care of all livestock and keep a safe environment for staff, animals, participants, and spectators. Professional rodeo animals represent a major investment for stock contractors and only the best of care is acceptable for BRP-RODEO. Cowboys, Cowgirls, stock contractors, and staff all have been around animals most of their lives, and they possess a high degree of respect and fondness for the livestock. Professional rodeo competitors wouldn't participate if there were any apparent mistreatment of animals.

Anyone who attends a BRP-RODEO professional rodeo event can be assured that the greatest care has been taken to prevent injury to animals, spectators, staff, and contestants. All BRP-RODEO staff, contestants, and stock contractors are bound by by-laws and rules, including a section that deals exclusively with the humane treatment of animals. Professional rodeo judges, who are charged with the enforcement of all BRP-RODEO rules, believe in these humane regulations and do not hesitate to report violations. BRP-RODEO event productions are a guarantee that a rodeo will be produced by people who sincerely care about the animals.



RODEO EVENTS

Competition

Rodeo competition falls into one or two categories: rough stock events or timed events.

In all rough stock events, the cowboy must ride for eight seconds to receive a qualified score; rough stock events are the riding events of professional rodeo: saddle bronc riding, bareback riding, and bull riding. The contestant uses only one hand to secure himself to the animal. He may not touch the animal, himself, or any equipment with his “free hand” during the ride; doing so results in automatic disqualification and a “no score” for the round.

In regular-season rodeos, two professional officials judge the rough stock action. Each judge awards up to 25 points for the contestant’s performance and up to 25 points for the animal’s bucking efforts. The scores of the two judges are then added together to determine the contestant’s total score. A perfect score is 100.

In the timed events, steer wrestling (bulldogging), steer undecorating, relay racing (pony express), tie-down roping (calf roping), break away roping, team roping, and barrel racing, most contestants ride quarter horses. The calf or steer is always given a head start, determined by the size of the arena; it cannot be changed after the first animal has been released. A barrier string stretched across the box where the contestant waits to make his run is released when the calf or steer has gone the predetermined distance. If the contestant breaks the barrier, he is assessed a 10-second penalty. Mutton busting is in a class of its own without specific rules and tons of fun and excitement.

Some events are exclusively for children and junior-age youth however, contestants that meet the rules requirements may participate in both junior and adult events.



Steer Wrestling (Bulldogger)

Steer Wrestling, also known as bulldogging, is a rodeo event in which a horse-mounted rider chases a steer and drops from the horse to the steer then wrestles the steer to the ground by twisting its horns.

William Pickett was born on this date in 1870. He was a legendary cowboy of Black and Indian descent.

Bill Pickett, the second of 13 children, began his career as a cowboy while in grade school. Pickett soon began giving exhibitions of his roping, riding, and bulldogging skills while passing a hat for donations. By 1888, his family had moved to Taylor, Texas, and Bill performed in the town's first fair that year. He and his brothers started a horse-breaking business in Taylor, and he was a member of the National Guard and a deacon of the Baptist church.

He signed on with the 101 Ranch show in 1905 and became a full-time ranch employee in 1907; soon after he moved his wife and children to Oklahoma. From 1905 to 1931, the 101 Ranch Wild West Show was one of the great shows in the country; the 101 Ranch Show introduced bulldogging (steer wrestling) the event invented by Bill Pickett, one of the show's stars.

While riding his horse, Spradley, Pickett came alongside a Longhorn steer, dropped to the steer's head, twisted its head toward the sky, and bit its upper lip to get full control.



Cow dogs of the Bulldog breed were known to bite the lips of cattle to subdue them. This was how Pickett's technique got the name "bulldogging."

He later performed in Canada, Mexico, South America, and England. He became the first black cowboy movie star. Had he not been banned from competing with White rodeo contestants, Pickett might have become one of the greatest record-setters in the sport. He was often identified as an Indian or some ethnic background other than black to be allowed to compete. Bill Pickett died in 1932, after he was kicked in the head by a horse. Famed humorist Will Rogers announced the funeral of his friend on his radio show. His grave is on what is left of the 101 Ranch near Ponca City, Oklahoma.

In 1989, years after being honored by the National Rodeo Hall of Fame, Pickett was inducted into the Pro-rodeo Hall of Fame and Museum of the American Cowboy at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Bill Pickett is also in the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

Steer Wrestling is the quickest event in rodeo, the objective of the endeavor is evident in its name: to wrestle a steer to the ground using only leverage and strength. The steer wrestler or "bulldogger" begins his run behind a barrier along with his "hazer," a second cowboy whose task is to keep the steer from veering away from the steer wrestler. The steer is given a head start, the length of which varies depending on the size of the arena. After the steer has reached the "score-line" and the barrier is released, the steer wrestler and hazer chase the steer on their specially trained quarter horses until the bulldogger is in position to dismount onto the racing steer. The steer wrestler slides down the right side of his horse until he can reach the steer's horns. He hooks his right arm around the steer's right horn and grasps the left horn in his left hand, then digs his heels deep in the dirt and uses leverage to bring down the steer. In addition to sheer strength, timing and balance are important to the steer wrestler. The hazer also is an important factor in the equation; without him, the steer could quickly sour a run by veering away from the steer wrestler. If the steer wrestler places, the hazer receives a share of the payoff. If not, then both go home empty-handed.



Relay Racing

Relay racing is a crowd-pleasing spectacle that involves expert horsemanship, teamwork, pageantry and the potential for disaster at every turn as the spectators stand and cheer during the race. The excitement in the stands is contagious as race time nears and even newcomers to the sport quickly find themselves caught up in the moment.

The first horse in the relay is lead to a starting line marked across the track. Team members hold the second and third horses for each relay team along the rail. At the signal, each rider leaps aboard his horse and races off. The second and third horses are no longer standing quietly but jumping and rearing from the excitement and noise around them. Add to this, the unsuccessful transfers-riders sprawled face down in the dirt of the track or clinging to the side of a horse in a struggle to stay aboard- and it's easy to see why relay racing has helped to fill the stands at local rodeos across the West. The action continues as the second lap is completed and riders vault aboard their third horse; in the stands, the crowd roars as riders bare down from the bell lap on to the finish where one triumphant team takes the prize after placing the baton into the barrel located in the center of the arena.



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Steer Undecorating

Steer undecorating is the female version of steer wrestling. Rather than dismounting the horse and pulling the steer to the ground, the cowgirl has to run up alongside of the steer and remove a brightly colored ribbon attached to its back. The cowgirl is allowed a “hazer”, which makes the difference between winning and losing, on one side to help line up and ensure that the steer doesn’t veer away from the cowgirl. The cowgirl must ride alongside the steer, lean down and remove the ribbon. As soon as she has the ribbon, she sits up and holds the ribbon up to signal her victory to the judge. Ladies Steer Undecorating is said to be the fastest event in rodeo. The winning times are between 2-3 seconds.



Bronc Riding

Saddle bronc riding requires the balance of a gymnast, the timing of a springboard diver, and the grace of a dancer—all aboard a 1,200-pound pitching, twisting bronc. Considered rodeo’s “classic” event, saddle bronc riding evolved from the ranch work of breaking and training horses. Many cowboys say bronc riding is the most difficult rough stock event to master because of its technical requirements. Spurring action must be synchronized with the horse’s movements. If a rider can “keep in time” with the horse, the ride will be fluid and graceful, not wild and uncontrolled. A saddle bronc rider’s feet must touch the horse’s shoulders on the first jump out of the chute. This is called a “mark-out,” and a contestant who fails to have his feet in place at the beginning of the ride is said to have “missed his mark” and is disqualified. He will receive a “no score” for the round. The rider, gripping a thick rein attached to the horse’s halter is his only means of securing himself to the animal, attempts to place his feet over the horse’s shoulders a split second before the animal’s front feet strike the ground; as the horse bucks, the rider bends his knees and finishes his spurring stroke with his spurs near the “candle,” the back of the saddle, then snaps his feet back to the horse’s shoulders as the animal’s front feet hit the ground.



Bareback Bronc

To get an idea of the strength required in bareback riding, imagine riding a jackhammer as if it were a pogo stick, holding on with only one hand. Bareback riders claim their sport is not quite that simple. Bareback riding is the most physically demanding event in rodeo. Immense physical stress is placed on the arm and back, and bareback riders face more long-term injuries, such as elbow and lower back problems, than other rough stock cowboys. Sheer strength isn't all that's required. A bareback rider is judged on his spurring technique, the degree to which his toes remain turned away from the horse throughout the ride, and his "exposure," or willingness to lean far back and take whatever may come during a ride. The horse's bucking action also contributes half a rider's score. Bareback riders grasp a "rigging," a handhold made of leather and rawhide, that is secured to the horse with a cinch. The rigging must meet size and design specifications set by professional rodeo standards. Bareback riding also requires the rider to "mark out" his horse—to place his feet above the horse's shoulders until the animal's front feet hit the ground on its first move out of the chute. Failure by the cowboy to keep his feet in place results in disqualification. After the initial jump out of the chute, the cowboy pulls his spurs up the horse's neck and shoulders until the spurs are nearly touching the rigging. The rider then straightens his legs, again placing his feet on the horse's shoulders, in anticipation of the next jump.



Bull Riding

Most rodeo events originated on the ranches and cattle drives of the Old West. Roping cattle and riding broncs in competition were natural extensions of ranch work. Climbing aboard a bull, however, was not. Many people view attempting to ride a surprisingly agile and powerful 2,000-pound bull as a concept that is not sane. But those who make their living riding bulls swear by the lifestyle. Bull riding requires balance, coordination, quick reflexes, flexibility, and perhaps above all else a positive mental attitude. The bull rider holds a flat-braided rope during his eight-second ride. In preparation for the ride, he pulls the tail of the rope through a loop, then wraps the rope around his riding hand sometimes weaving the rope through his fingers to secure his grip. He nods his head as a signal for the chute gate to be opened and the ride to begin. Each bull has a unique style of bucking, many bulls spin or continuously circle in one area of the arena; others add a jump or kick to their spin, making them more difficult to ride. Still others jump and kick in a straight line, move side to side during a jump, or lunge forward in an attempt to rid themselves of a rider. The cowboy's control during the ride and the bull's bucking efforts each account for half of the rider's score.



Tie-Down Roping (Calf Roping)

More than any other event in professional rodeo, tie-down roping has roots dating back to the Old West. When a calf was sick or injured, it had to be caught and immobilized quickly for treatment; ranch hands prided themselves on how fast they could rope and tie calves, and soon they began informal contests. Being quick and accurate with a lasso aren't the only requirements in tie-down roping. A successful roper must also be an experienced horseman and a fast sprinter. After giving the calf a predesignated head start, the horse and rider give chase. As the cowboy throws his loop, the horse comes to a stop. After catching the calf, the cowboy dismounts runs to the calf, throws it to the ground by hand (called "flanking"), and ties any three legs together using a "pigging string" he has carried in his teeth throughout the run. While the contestant is accomplishing all this, the horse must keep slack out of the rope, but not pull it tight enough to drag the calf. If the calf is not standing when the roper reaches it, the cowboy must allow the calf to stand and then flank it before making the tie. When the roper has completed his tie, he throws his hands in the air as a signal to the flag judge. He then remounts his horse and rides toward the calf, making the rope slack. The calf must remain tied for six seconds after the rope is slack or the cowboy will receive a "no time."



Team Roping

Team roping, the only true team event in professional rodeo, requires close cooperation between two cowboys and their horses. Equally important are the talents of the header and the heeler. Most team ropers specialize, although some work alternately, as a header or a heeler. As in all timed events, the steer is given a head start based on the size of the arena. The header waits behind a barrier, which is released after the steer has taken the proper head start. If the header breaks the barrier, the team is assessed a 10-second penalty. The heeler follows after the header has started his pursuit. The header is the first to rope. He must catch the steer around the horns, around one horn and the head, or the neck. His roping job completed, the header dallies the rope around his saddle horn and rides to the left, turning the steer away from the heeler. As the header rides away, the heeler ropes the steer's hind feet. Catching only one-foot results in a five-second penalty. The clock is stopped when no slack is in the rope and the ropers are facing each other. Horses are trained separately for their specialties, heading or heeling. Heading horses usually are taller and heavier than heeling horses because they must turn the steer after the header has made his catch. Heeling horses are quick and agile because they must be able to keep up with the steer's every move. The horse of choice for either specialty is the quarter horse. Team roping originated on ranches when a large steer had to be caught and treated or branded and still is common on ranches today.



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Barrel Racing

What started as a group of Texas ranch women in 1948 who wanted to add a little color and femininity to the rough-and-tumble sport of rodeo is now a computerized association with over 2,000 members. Ladies' saddle bronc riding and trick riding were once a part of the early days of rodeo and Wild West shows and were the only events in which women were allowed to participate. As these two events began to wane, the enthusiastic Texan women developed the clover-leaf pattern, and the fastest contestants around the course won. A segment of the original association was all-women rodeos.



Break Away Roping

Breakaway roping is a variation of calf roping where a calf is roped, but not thrown and tied. It is a rodeo event that features a calf and one mounted rider. The calves are moved one at a time through narrow runs leading to a chute with spring-loaded doors. The horse and rider wait in a box next to the chute that has a spring-loaded rope, known as the barrier, stretched in front. A light rope is fastened from the chute to the calf's neck, releasing once the calf is well away from the chute and releasing the barrier, which is used to ensure that the calf gets a head start. Once the barrier has been released, the horse runs out of the box while the roper attempts to throw a lasso around the neck of the calf.

Once the rope is around the calf's neck, the roper signals the horse to stop suddenly. The rope is tied to the saddle horn with a string. When the calf hits the end of the rope, the rope is pulled tight, and the string breaks. The breaking of the string marks the end of the run. The rope usually has a small white flag at the end that makes the moment the rope breaks more easily seen by the timer. The fastest run wins.

Breakaway roping is usually seen in junior, high school, college, and semi-professional rodeos. At the collegiate level, it is primarily a women's event, but at other levels, competitors are both male and female. Some amateur rodeos also have breakaway roping as part of their event line-up. It is also used as a substitute for calf roping in some parts of Europe, where traditional calf roping, also called tie-down roping, is banned.



Mutton Busting

In this event, a sheep is held still, either in a small chute or by an adult handler while a child is placed on top in a riding position. Once the child is seated atop the sheep, the sheep is released and usually starts to run in an attempt to get the child off. Often small prizes or ribbons are given out to the children who can stay on the longest. There are no set rules for mutton busting, no national organization, and most events are organized at the local level.

The vast majority of children participating in the event fall off in less than 8 seconds. Age, height, and weight restrictions on participants generally prevent injuries to the sheep, and implements such as spurs are banned from use. In most cases, children are required to wear helmets, and parents are often asked to sign waivers to protect the rodeo from legal action in that event.

The practice has been documented as having been introduced to the National Western Stock Show in the 1980s when an event was sponsored by Nancy Stockdale Cervi, a former rodeo queen. At that event, children ages five to seven who weighed less than 55 pounds could apply, and ultimately seven contestants were selected to each ride a sheep for six seconds. There are no statistics about the popularity of the sport, but anecdotal reports suggest thousands of children participate in such events every year in the U.S.

Supporters consider the event both entertaining and a way to introduce young children to the adult rodeo "rough stock" riding events of bull riding, saddle bronc, and bareback riding, and find favor in its rough-and-tumble nature to the way youth sports such as football are played.