

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Ruth Nicolaus

319-321-2152

## **DISH THE DIRT**

Phillipsburg rodeo makes it a three-peat in arena conditions award

Phillipsburg, Kan. (October 25, 2023) – Kansas Biggest Rodeo has been recognized as having the best arena conditions for horses and barrel racers in the Prairie Circuit.

For the third consecutive year, the rodeo has been awarded the Women’s Pro Rodeo Association (WPRA) Justin Best Footing Award for the Prairie Circuit, the rodeos in Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

The award is given to rodeo committees “who have gone above and beyond this past year to ensure safe ground for the animal athletes of rodeo, specifically the barrel racing horses,” the WPRA news release stated.

Ricky Solida, Phillipsburg rodeo committee member, is responsible for making sure the arena dirt is not only safe for the horses, so they don’t slip, but is high quality, so they are able to make the fastest run possible.

Because of excellent arena conditions, the top barrel racers in the nation come to compete in Phillipsburg, Solida said.

“We have the big names who come here,” he said, including four-time and reigning world champion Hailey Kinsel, Cotulla, Texas, who won the rodeo this year with a time of 16.75 seconds and also won the rodeo two years ago.

And because of the excellent arena conditions, Solida said the barrel racers are willing to compete on their top horses, instead of backup horses, which makes for a better experience for rodeo fans. Kinsel rode her horse Sissy Hayday, “Sister,” a palomino who was the 2018 WPRA/AQHA Barrel Horse of the Year.

It’s gratifying to be recognized for the extra work, he said. The award “just shows we go a step above and beyond to make the arena good for all the contestants and horses.”

LandMark Implement donates the use of a John Deere tractor for the rodeo.

Other rodeos winning the award in the Prairie Circuit include the Elk City, Okla. Rodeo, second place, and the Longford, Kan. Rodeo third place. Most improved award was won by the Dodge City (Kan.) Roundup Rodeo.

The WPRA recognized the top three rodeos in all twelve circuits, as well as the most improved rodeo.

Award winners will be recognized at the WPRA celebration in Las Vegas on Dec. 7 at the South Point Hotel and Casino. This is the fourth time in seven years the rodeo has won first place.

The 2024 Kansas Biggest Rodeo will be held August 1-3.

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Cutline:

Hailey Kinsel, Cotulla, Texas, wins the 2023 Phillipsburg Rodeo on her horse Sister (who was the 2018 WPRA/AQHA Barrel Horse of the Year winner). The Phillipsburg rodeo has won the WPRA Justin Best Footing Award for the Prairie Circuit. Photo by Terri Abrahamsen.