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The journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step.

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CPRA Finals Coming To Town



Photo by: Nancy Wilkins

HEMPSTEAD, Texas – The changes for the Waller County Fair and Rodeo keep coming.

"We are one of the few fairs, if not the only one, in southeast Texas that has two pro rodeos, the CPRA Finals and the PRCA rodeo," said Paul Shollar, president of the Waller County Fair Board. "It benefits everybody involved, from our vendors to

the members of our community by giving them more. Because of that, we're actually extending our fair two days.

"We're starting off Thursday instead of Saturday and will have three full nights of the CPRA Finals. We've got a lot more going on during our opening weekend than we've ever had before, and that's going to be a good deal for

everyone."

The Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association is made up of contestants and events primarily from southeast Texas, said Darrell Petry, the organization's president and a longtime rodeo cowboy. For the past several years, the CPRA has conducted its finals in Angleton, Texas, but has made the move to Waller County starting this year. Its three-day championship will feature the top 15 contestants in the association's standings from each event and will take place Thursday, Sept. 26-Saturday, Sept. 28, at the Waller County Fairgrounds in Hempstead.

"We've been thinking for the last couple of years about getting a more centralized location," said Petry of Cheek, Texas. "Hempstead came up, and they've developed that complex, covered it, added new stalls, and we were like, 'It's more central to most of our rodeos.'

"We thought it was phenomenal."

So, the move was made,

and it's going to increase the overall exposure for exposition to 10 days, from Sept. 28-Oct. 5. The covered rodeo arena was introduced to the community a year ago, and it's been a successful development.

"We just thought it was a smart move for us to get there to that new place," Petry said. "It's attracted a lot of people to our organization. I think it's really helped our membership tremendously. Our membership shot up because of the location. We think we're going to grow from this."

The idea behind the newly covered arena was to make it available throughout the year for a variety of events to utilize. Everything seems to be going according to plan. Because of the opportunities available, plenty of people want to take advantage of the facilities, which include the addition of 102 stalls, additional RV hookups, a new wash rack for animals and an updated sound system.

"I was talking to Clint Sciba and Dustin Standly, and we decided to not do anything temporary," Shollar said. "We decided we're going to build it and said, 'Let's just go and build it to where when we're done, we can say that's going to be here for our grandkids.'"

It's being noticed.

"We just saw an opportunity to grow our association and make it that much better and elevate it," Petry said. "It's not that Angleton was bad, because we really appreciated them and what they've done for us, but the contestants were just ecstatic that we were changing locations, plus we're right outside of Cypress and all those outlets. It's

a great partnership."

Waller County has a long-standing tradition in the sport of rodeo, and fans make their way to see the action that takes place inside the complex. The CPRA Finals will just enhance that. While the PRCA is the most identifiable association in the sport and will crown world champions at the National Finals Rodeo in December, the CPRA is home to some outstanding talent.

Among the CPRA leaders expected to compete each of three days of competition are a handful of cowboys and cowgirls that have played on the sport's biggest stages. Petry is one of them.

"When you're done and don't want to travel and stay gone for five or six months out of the year and you have families, these guys want to work but still want to rodeo," he said. "This give them great competition, and they can still go to work. They can get off work on Fridays, and probably still make a few rodeos. It's convenient, and it's guys that still have the talent but don't want to travel as much.

"The competition is great, and they still get that competitive feel."

The CPRA is the perfect association for families from this part of the state. Now, everyone feels right at home for the organization's championship event at the Waller County Fairgrounds.



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Candlelight Vigil

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In Hempstead

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