

Happy 4th of July

2020



2019 & 2020 Sweetheart Jaden Doak

**Willits
FRONTIER DAYS**

Willits Frontier Days board cancels parade and other annual events to be health code compliant, still hopes to hold October rodeo

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"Nothing hurts me worse than to not have our regular 4th of July," said Willits Frontier Days past president and long-time festivities participant Lee Persico. "I've been riding in the parade every year since I was 6 months old, that's 84 years. But this year, it's just going to have to be different."

Persico shares sentiments with the entire Willits Frontier Days board who had to make the hard decision last week at their May board meeting to go ahead and cancel the parade, hometown celebration, horse show, carnival, anthem contest and other usual

activities in order to remain compliant with the health codes and local, state and federal guidelines.

The rodeo, however, has been officially postponed, allowing the group to hope things change enough in 2020 to allow the

Ranch Rodeo event, usually held in October, to take place, and therefore keeping the coveted "Longest Continuous Running Rodeo in California" title accurate.

"This is not what any of us want, or wanted to have to do," said Marcy Barry, current Willits Frontier Days vice president. "But we have to. We have to remain compliant under the order, and we will not jeopardize our future events, the use of the grounds, or our ability to get insurance or permits to try and force this to happen this year. It's a real bummer, but it is just what we have to do."

Ignoring the in-place orders and guidelines could put the future of the events entirely at risk. No agency is going to go along with disobeying the orders, and without issuance of a Caltrans permit to close the road, or ABC license to serve alcohol, or general liability insurance for the grounds, and staff, spectator and contestant safety, Willits Frontier Days could be sued into oblivion for any number

of probable problems ... and that's just not wise or reasonable.

"It's not just Willits who is experiencing these event cancellations," reminded Persico. "This event is a massive draw for people all around the state and country, and bringing them here to all be close to one another during this time is irresponsible. There's not even motel rooms available for people to stay in if they did come, they're closed too. I am a part of several horseback trail riding groups who are out in the open, camp out, don't see others for days on end, and even those events are being cancelled."

Persico went on to point out how all of the other state rodeos, events, and fairs have also been cancelled for several of the same concerns shared by the board of Willits Frontier Days.

"The Olympics have even postponed," said Persico. "It would be pound wise and penny foolish to buck the system and try and hold an event during this time. The potential for someone to come here, get people sick, and the lawsuits that would follow made the board have no choice but to reluctantly take this hard position. No other big events are being put on – people need to pay attention to what's going on elsewhere and realize that this is for the best interest of all involved."

"We want to do what we can to get the community open as fast as we can," said Barry. "Part of this is cancelling this year's 4th of July events. We were very careful to say 'postpone' as far as the rodeo was concerned, however, we all want to ensure our title remains for the longest rodeo, but we just can't hold the rest of the events at this time."

In the highly unlikely event that things somehow drastically change come July 4, and everyone will be able to congregate without restrictions, the amount of advance planning needed to take place to put all 17 Willits Frontier Days events together is impossible at the last minute. A decision had to be made now.

Forging ahead and being charged for insurance policies, agreements with stock contractors, purses for the rodeo events, ordering buckles, a Sweetheart saddle, printing a program, buying radio time, not to mention mundane things like securing port-a-potties and dumpsters, all takes money that would not be recouped without an event.

"It would be like writing a check and throwing it into the wind," said Persico. "It would be a huge waste and hit to the bank account, especially without alcohol sales at or ticket sales in advance of the events."

The actual 4th of July isn't cancelled, remember. This year will just involve a different way to celebrate the holiday. Have a barbecue at your home. Visit the cemeteries and learn about the veterans who lived in the area and served our country. Make a donation to the American Legion. Make a video to stream of your family raising an American flag and saying the Pledge of Allegiance in unison. Send off your voter registration card. Bake an apple pie.

We can all get through this as a community. It's a strange year. True. But if we can all please take a breath, calm down, be nice to one another, do what's asked of us and try and follow the rules, hopefully it will all be over sooner than it would have been able to be otherwise ... and that's really what everyone wants.

A message from the Willits Frontier Days President FRED BARRY

"If we all work together, we'll get through it together," encouraged Fred Barry, Willits Frontier Days president, who has the challenging task of honoring the board's decision to forgo this year's June and July events as required by the coronavirus epidemic.

Usually, June and July are filled with truck pulls, horse shows, hometown celebrations, carnivals and the Sweetheart events, but this year, all have been cancelled to try and keep the community from spreading and contracting the contagious virus – and was done due to the state, county and city's health orders and requirements.

"We absolutely do this with a heavy heart," continued Barry. "We did what we had to do; it was what the state asked our county, and the county asked of our city. We lease the land for the grounds from the City of Willits, and we have a good working relationship to keep the event able to happen every year, as it has for 93 previous years. We cannot jeopardize that, and we cannot put people, and ourselves, at risk."

While all of the events are certainly community traditions, the rodeos that are held on July 3 and 4 are part of Willits' special delineation, with Willits Frontier Days holding the title for "Longest Continuous Running Rodeo in California." Not wanting to put an end to this title, Willits Frontier Days hopes and plans to hold their Ranch Rodeo in October, which will keep a rodeo at the grounds in 2020, keeping truth to the title.

A rodeo, especially one with spectators, will only be possible, however, if steps and precautions are taken to allow more and more business, activities and areas to open up and resume normal operations by then. The Willits Frontier Days board's decision to pause on the summer events is a vital step along that path.

"It is a real bummer; we know more than anyone how disappointing it is to not hold the regular event schedule this year," said Barry. "However, it's more important to us that we are able to keep the future of Frontier Days going, by following the rules we are required to follow. We want to make it to our 100th year – that'll be 2026 – and continue to do the other fun events we have planned – like the concerts."

"The liability is huge if something bad happened," continued Barry. "What if there was an outbreak? What if we held it against the health orders and lost our lease on the property? How can we serve food and drinks without a license issued from the county? What if there was an accident, and we didn't have insurance in place? We can't take the risk. It could set us back so far, and that would be crazy."

"Please, enjoy a different kind of Fourth of July this year," said Barry. "Stay safe, spend time with family – we promise, we'll make it up to everyone next year with an amazing 2021 Willits Frontier Days to come."



Photos by Maureen Moore

Above: Willits Frontier Days President Fred Barry. Below: Barry stands with wife, Marcy, left, and daughter Danielle.



WILLITS

Back row, from left: Danielle Barry, Tracy Evans, Karen Cavanaugh, Marcy Barry, Fred Barry, Bruce Cartwright, Deana Rutledge, Earl Rambauth, Matt Harbour, Willie England and Alexis England.

Front row: Madison Forrester, Lee Persico, June Sizemore, Cathy Moorhead, Ron Moorhead, Jeff Cook, Kera Colvard, Alyssa Colvard and Jaden Doak.

Proud to be the Willits Frontier Days Crew 2020

Photo by
Maureen
Moore





Work Around the Grounds

Photos by Marcy Barry

Even though the traditional June and July events have been cancelled this year, we are still hard at work on the grounds! We've been fixing up one of the serving booths and covering it with Coleman Ranch boards siding, doing structural work at the back of the arena, and we hope to get to rebuild the stairs and catwalk up to the announcers booth, with steel donated by Calvin Harwood.

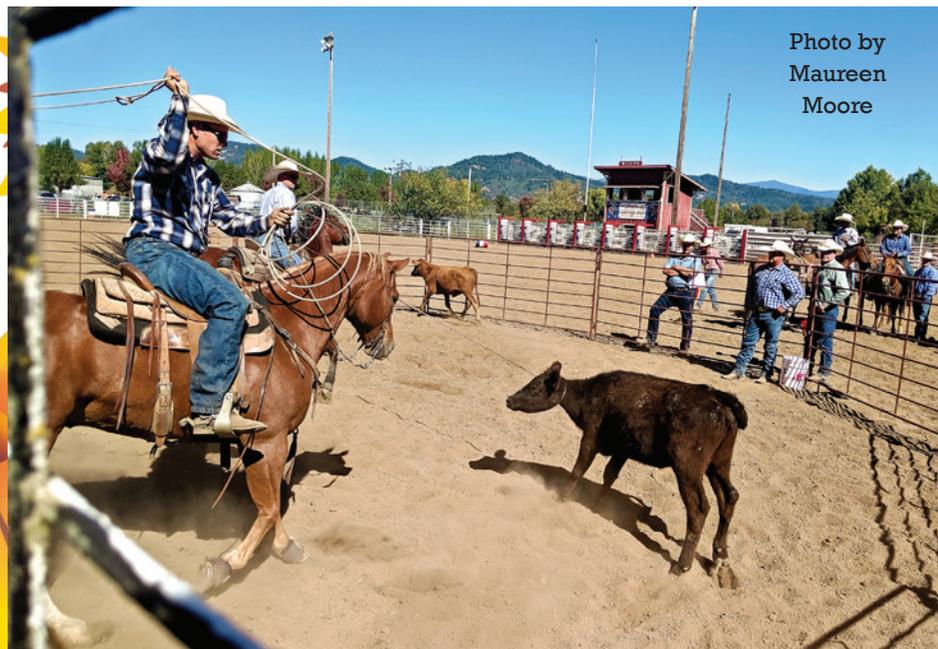


Photo by
Maureen
Moore

Ranch Rodeo

While the traditional CCPRA rodeo has been postponed from its normal July 3 and 4 dates, plans are in place to still hold our Ranch Rodeo, traditionally done in October, to ensure Willits keeps its coveted

"OLDEST CONTINUOUS RODEO CELEBRATION IN CALIFORNIA"

slogan and marker in history. Hopefully, gathering in larger groups will be permitted by then, and we can have live attendance at the event. Stay tuned, we miss you!



Past Sweethearts

The two young women who were planning to run for the 2020 title: Madison Forrester, left, and Samantha Arms, right, were hoping to join the roster of past Sweethearts, center.

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|------|-------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| 1926 | None | 1956 | Betty Ann Stansberry Erbes | 1989 | Dina Pinon Parker |
| 1927 | Marie Schloegel
Novaglie | 1957 | Patricia Moreno Door | 1990 | Melanie Ulvila |
| 1928 | Martha Warner Kelton | 1958 | Letha Schumaker Wiley | 1991 | Lanae Shuster Lamkin |
| 1929 | Lola Butts | 1959 | Marian Whitely Ross | 1992 | Amanda Hiatt Hower |
| 1930 | None | 1960 | Carol Collier McClendon | 1993 | Amy Ford |
| 1931 | None | 1961 | Mardi Wilson Hinton | 1994 | Marta Trevey |
| 1932 | Enola McKenzie Reed | 1962 | Linda Allen Banks | 1995 | Tori Nunnemaker Minton |
| 1933 | Betty Akins | 1963 | Susan Fonsen Neilson | 1996 | Georgeanne Dawson Crosky |
| 1934 | Amy Gardner | 1964 | Sue Hardaway | 1997 | Patricia Garrity |
| 1935 | Jemma Pedroncelli
Serventi | 1965 | Sharon Baker Arno | 1998 | Ileah Leone |
| 1936 | Elizabeth Wendt
Ferguson | 1966 | Leslie Cogburn Scaglione | 1999 | Mary Garrity |
| 1937 | Alice Gibellini Wade | 1967 | Joann Schloegel | 2000 | Olivia Grupp |
| 1938 | Dorce Brown | 1968 | Clydeen Smith Dick | 2001 | Katherine Whitty |
| 1939 | Ernistime Casteel DeBoer | 1969 | Mousey Clatty | 2002 | Sandi Short |
| 1940 | Evelyn Robley Bergson | 1970 | Kam Maize LaLaguna | 2003 | Mattie Pinon |
| 1941 | Pauline Standley Perez | 1971 | Margaret Smith | 2004 | Tina Holquin |
| 1942 | Melba Dempsey Lewis | 1972 | Paulette Wilcott Sordahl | 2005 | Ashtan Bloomquist |
| 1943 | Ann Cox McGinnis | 1973 | Jann Clatty Rickey | 2006 | Darcy Ford |
| 1944 | Anna Ford Hardwick | 1974 | Kathy Persico Graves | 2007 | Courtney Figg-Hoblyn |
| 1945 | Lillian Kroh Nolan | 1975 | Lorraine Soulliere Crabtree | 2008 | McKenzie Barlow |
| 1946 | Georgia Stovall Welch | 1976 | Tami Tharp Romberg Mayfield | 2009 | Lindsey Bowlds |
| 1947 | Anne Crabtree Henderson | 1977 | Kelly Bielenberg Eoff | 2010 | Stephanie Standley |
| 1948 | Lillian Kroh Nolan | 1978 | Julie Canepa Belvin | 2011 | Riata King |
| 1949 | Betty Mast Campbell | 1979 | Liz Persico Day | 2012 | Rachel Belvin |
| 1950 | Wanda Lane Johnston | 1980 | Cindy Kostanecki Kelly | 2013 | Lilja Lamkin |
| 1951 | Gretchen Mullen Weber | 1981 | Stacey Blalack McKinley | 2014 | Haley Schuck |
| 1952 | Yvonne Dusseau Leever | 1982 | Caroline Kostanecki Durupt | 2015 | Caitlyn Forrester |
| 1953 | Claire Huffman Robertson | 1983 | Sandra DuCross Norman | 2016 | Halee Reed |
| 1954 | Joan Neary Von Weien | 1984 | Chrissy Kostanecki | 2017 | Hailey Riley |
| 1955 | Shirley Merritt Nikolashin | 1985 | Tracey Ford Moody | 2018 | Lilah Garman |
| | | 1986 | Kristine McBride Tyrrell | 2019 | Jaden Doak |
| | | 1987 | Kim Colwell Lebo | 2020 | Jaden Doak (No Events) |
| | | 1988 | Nicole Persico Kunka | | |

Since COVID-19 cancelled the June/July events, no contest was held for 2020, and 2019 winner Jaden Doak will get to be the first two-term Sweetheart by default.

Photos by
Maureen
Moore

Giving Thanks

Willits Frontier Days is only possible with community support, and every year, dozens of businesses and individuals purchase ads, sponsor events, and much more. Since we had to pause on the traditional process this year, we wanted to give an extra shout out to the businesses who helped make the 2019 event happen. We look forward to everything returning to normal for 2021. Thank you all!

Adventist Health
Howard Memorial
101 Burgers
101 Trailer and RV
Ace Copy
Alfred Kerr D.D.S.
Ask Hay Sales
Bouthillier's Construction
Brad Walton, CPA
Budweiser - Eagle Distributing
Carl's Classics
City of Lights
Coast Hardware
Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty
CS Horsemanship
East Hill Veterinary Clinic
El Mexicano Restaurant
Emerald City
Flying S Hay Sales
Frank R. Howard Foundation
Garman
Construction
Services
Garton Tractor, Inc.
Geiger's Long
Valley Market
Grist Creek
Aggregates

Grocery Outlet
Grow West
Harrah Industries
Healing Central Chiropractic
Hennessy Funds
Hollifield Construction
House Doctor Paints
J. D. Redhouse
Jeff's Gas Appliances
Junior Horsemen
Laura McBride
Les Schwab Tire Center
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Little Lake Health
Center - MCHC
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Mendocino Construction
Services
Myers Medical Pharmacy
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Randall Cantua
Farmers Insurance
Rio's Fish and Chips
Ron's Muffler & Automotive
Round Tree Glass
Savings Bank
of Mendocino County
Sherwood Valley Casino
SHN Consulting Engineers
& Geologists, Inc.
Sonoma Clean Power
T & T Salvage & Storage
Taco Bell
Taqueria Ramirez
Thurston Auto Plaza
Tri Counties Bank
Willits Animal Hospital
Willits Chamber
of Commerce
Willits Furniture Center
Willits Mini Storage
Willits Power and Hardware
Willits Property Management
Willits Weekly
Windsor Mill
Wylatti
Yokum's Body Shop, Inc.

In Our Memory Barbara Taylor

February 5, 1949 - November 24, 2019

Barbara will surely be missed. She and her husband, Cloyd, drove from Arizona every year to stay at the rodeo grounds for at least a month to answer phones, sell tickets and just keep all of us in line. We will miss you, Barbara! Thank you for all that you have done for Willits Frontier Days!

