

## A PINK AFFAIR

The color of the chutes and gates as you entered the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo provided a beautiful pink backdrop for the three performances held March 16-18. PINK. And all around the cowboys, contract personnel, vendors and ticket holders proved that pink ain't for sissies.

For the second year the rodeo committee pushed the Tough Enough to Wear Pink initiative to raise awareness of and funds for Breast Cancer. The rodeo kicked off it's advertising of the rodeo and Tough Enough to Wear Pink campaign in conjunction with the Lake City Downtown Action Committee. The Downtown Action Committee hosts monthly movies in the park usually from March through November. This year they agreed to move their opening to February and allowed the Rodeo Committee to paint downtown pink. Pink bows were put on everything from lamp posts to street lights. The Courthouse and adjacent Annex along with City Hall offices sported huge pink bows as did the park restrooms which were still under construction. Rodeo Committee members introduced their new mascot, Oscar the Rodeo Bull. Breast cancer jewelry and t-shirts were sold and the rodeo and its' fund raising events were advertised.

The Committee hosted a week of activities leading up to the rodeo all built around the idea of raising funds and awareness for breast cancer. A golf tournament raised just under \$10,000 through hole sponsorships and entry fees.

On Saturday, March 10, the community turned out for a barbeque dinner accompanied by silent and live auction. With Aubrey Bailey serving as auctioneer, Steve Briscoe and Bob Smith busily took bids on items ranging from a hand made breast cancer quilt to a pink golf cart. In keeping with the theme of the party, the auctioneer donned a pink tux, top hat and cane. The American Cancer Society and Jacksonville's Baptist Hospital provided free breast cancer information and kits to all in attendance. Additionally, breast cancer jewelry and t-shirts were available at the dinner and during each rodeo performance.

The rodeo parade held on Saturday, March 17 was awash in pink with several breast cancer survivors on horseback and the special rodeo float. Saturday night the cowboys, cowgirls and rodeo personnel joined the committee as they covered the arena in pink as checks were presented to the American Cancer Society and Buddy Check 12 programs. The Committee announced that they were establishing a crisis fund with part of the fund raising proceeds to assist those with immediate needs during times of crises.

When all was said and done, the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo proudly announces it met it's goal by raising \$50,000 during the 2007 campaign. The group wishes to again thank all those who participated in our rodeo as well as all event sponsors. We are grateful to have such a supportive community and thank all who participated through the purchase of items including tickets to the rodeo.