



# ROUNDING UP TOBACCO IN MINNESOTA RODEOS

*A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY ADVOCATES ON  
CREATING TOBACCO-FREE RODEOS*

Rodeos bring communities together to share civic pride, time with family, and memories of the Old West. Rodeos also allow communities to express themselves and teach traditions to their children. Unfortunately, the great tradition of rodeo has been stained by the image of tobacco.

Whether your goal is to eliminate tobacco sponsorship, eliminate tobacco usage from the rodeo grounds, or both, this guide will help you. Cowboys and ponies may travel from city to city, but the traditions and memories of the rodeo stay in the community long after the competitions are over. Creating a tobacco-free rodeo helps to build healthy and positive traditions for generations to come.

## THE HISTORY OF RODEO

The first recorded rodeo in America took place in 1864, although it is believed that unrecorded rodeos have been in existence since the early 1700's. Cowboys and ranchers competed to determine who was the fastest and strongest at some of the day-to-day challenges of life on the range. These competitions included riding and roping techniques on horses and cattle. By the 1890's, cowboys began to travel the country and make a living in professional rodeo.

Today, rodeos take many forms. Men and women of all ages compete in rodeo competitions and people from a variety of backgrounds come to rodeos to enjoy the show. More than 170,000 fans attend the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas and more than 13 million viewers tune into the finals on ESPN; rodeo is certainly more popular and competitive than ever.

## THE CONNECTION OF RODEO AND TOBACCO

Rodeo is almost 150 years old, but it wasn't until the 1970's that tobacco companies began to realize the benefit of promoting their brands to millions of rodeo fans. In 1972, R.J. Reynolds became the first tobacco company to sponsor rodeos.

The U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company (USST) began contacts with rodeo associations in the mid-1980s and is now the biggest tobacco rodeo sponsor. USST has exclusive partnerships with several rodeo associations including the Professional Cowboys Association, Professional Bull Riders, Inc., and the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association.

Since 1974, USST has fostered the spit tobacco and college rodeo connection by awarding scholarships to college rodeo athletes. Today, the scholarship money exceeds \$200,000 annually.

*Source: Buck Tobacco.org*

## RODEO IN MINNESOTA

Organized rodeo in Minnesota began in 1955 when the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) sanctioned the first Buffalo Rodeo in Buffalo, MN. It has become Minnesota's longest running professional rodeo event. Today, you can find a rodeo in almost every corner of the state. Some rodeos showcase local talent, while others attract cowboys and cowgirls from all over the country.

Several of Minnesota's rodeos are put on by the Minnesota High School Rodeo Association. At MHSRA rodeos, you'll see competitors from grades 9-12 competing in events very similar to their professional adult counterparts. The MHSRA also has a Wrangler Division that is designed for rodeo participants in grades 6-8.

Part of the mission of the MHSRA is "to promote the sport of rodeo and the highest type of conduct and sportsmanship and expose its positive image to the general public." Tobacco use and sponsorship sour the positive image and high conduct that MHSRA promotes. MHSRA youth may be good advocates for a tobacco-free rodeo. Learn more about MHSRA at [www.mnhighschoolrodeo.org](http://www.mnhighschoolrodeo.org).

Some of Minnesota's rodeos are held in conjunction with county fairs, and some are independent rodeos. To find out when a rodeo near you is being held, you can look on ESPN's Pro Rodeo Web site ([www.espn.com](http://www.espn.com)) and the Minnesota Rodeo Association's Web site ([www.mnrodeo.org](http://www.mnrodeo.org)), but your best option may be to ask community members or search the Internet for rodeos in your community.



# KNOW THE RODEO

It's important to understand the terms, events, and organizations related to the rodeo that take place in your town. Web sites like the Wikipedia Encyclopedia ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)) and About: Rodeo (<http://rodeo.about.com>) can help you learn the terms, organizations, and history associated with American rodeo. Despite all of the information available about rodeos, perhaps the most valuable thing to understand is how the people in your community respond to the rodeo. Here are some definitions of events and associations to help you get started:

## Common Rodeo Events

- **Barrel Racing:** A horse rider runs a cloverleaf pattern around barrels.
- **Breakaway Roping:** A horse rider attempts to rope a calf. Like calf roping, but roper does not tie the calf.
- **Bronc Riding:** An untamed horse attempts to throw or buck off the rider. Rider attempts to stay on the horse for eight seconds without touching the horse with his free hand.
- **Bull Riding:** A rider gets on a large bull, and attempts to stay mounted for at least eight seconds.
- **Calf Roping:** A horse rider attempts to rope and tie the calf.
- **Mutton Busting:** A youth event similar to bull or bronc riding, but the rider is on a sheep (see picture below).
- **Pole Bending:** A horse rider runs a weaving path around six poles.
- **Steer Wrestling:** A horse rider chases a steer, jumps off the horse next to the steer, and wrestles the steer to the ground by twisting its horns.

## Rodeo Associations

- Bull Riders of America: <[www.bullridersofamerica.com](http://www.bullridersofamerica.com)>
- International Professional Rodeo Association: <[www.iprarodeo.com](http://www.iprarodeo.com)>
- Minnesota High School Rodeo Association: <[www.mnhighschoolrodeo.org](http://www.mnhighschoolrodeo.org)>
- Minnesota Rodeo Association: <[www.mnrodeo.org](http://www.mnrodeo.org)>
- National High School Rodeo Association: <[www.nhsra.org](http://www.nhsra.org)>
- National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association: <[www.collegerodeo.com](http://www.collegerodeo.com)>
- National Professional Rodeo Association: <[www.npra.com](http://www.npra.com)>
- Professional Bull Riders: <[www.pbrnow.com](http://www.pbrnow.com)>
- Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association: <<http://prorodeo.org>>
- United Rodeo Association: <[www.unitedrodeoassociation.com](http://www.unitedrodeoassociation.com)>
- United States Team Roping Championships: <[www.ustrc.com](http://www.ustrc.com)>
- Women's Professional Rodeo Association: <[www.wpra.com](http://www.wpra.com)>
- World's Toughest Rodeo: <[www.wtrodeo.com](http://www.wtrodeo.com)>



## RODEO RESOURCES

- **Buck Tobacco Sponsorship:** <[www.bucktobacco.org](http://www.bucktobacco.org)> Get ideas for tobacco-free rodeo advertising and read national tobacco-free rodeo policies.
- **Tobacco Sponsorship Tip Sheets:** <[www.bucktobacco.org/resources/tipsheet\\_s.html](http://www.bucktobacco.org/resources/tipsheet_s.html)> The tip sheets provide rodeo sponsorship facts and ideas for planning and implementing a tobacco-free rodeo.
- **Rodeo Toolkit:** <[www.tobaccofreecatalog.org](http://www.tobaccofreecatalog.org)> This California toolkit is available for order. It gives insight on what steps to take to create a tobacco-free rodeo.
- **Bucking Tobacco Sponsorship at Rodeos:** <[www.bmsg.org/proj-alcohol-rodeo.php](http://www.bmsg.org/proj-alcohol-rodeo.php)> A report by the Berkeley Media Studies Group that provides strategies for advocates.
- **Cowboy Ted:** <[www.cowboyted.com](http://www.cowboyted.com)> Cowboy Ted is a former rodeo cowboy who has been working on rodeo-based health education for over 20 years.

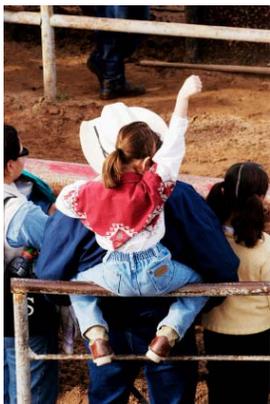
## NATIONWIDE TRENDS

Rodeos around the country are regulating tobacco at their events. Here are some well-known rodeos and their policies. Many of the policies can be found on Buck Tobacco's web site.

- **The Pendleton Round Up, Oregon:** In 2005, Pendleton passed an ordinance prohibiting tobacco sampling in public places or at public events, including the PRCA Pendleton RoundUp Rodeo (one of the nation's oldest rodeos). Phillip Houk, Pendleton mayor, commented, "Our primary goal was to keep it out of the hands of young people."
- **South Dakota State University:** In 2005, the rodeo team ended their contract with a tobacco company even though it meant giving up thousands of dollars in scholarship money. The team was able to partner with the American Cancer Society and the South Dakota Tobacco-Free Kids Network to replace the sponsorship money. Terry McCutcheon, the team's coach, said that now kids "can look at a cowboy and see that they don't have to chew or they don't have to smoke...you can still be a cowboy and still be an athlete and not have to have that as part of your character."
- **The Mother Lode Round-Up, California:** Mother Lode has written a policy that it will not accept or allow any tobacco-related sponsorship or advertising. The policy declares that tobacco advertisements distract from the family atmosphere.

Source:  
[Buck Tobacco.org](http://BuckTobacco.org)

## WHY TOBACCO-FREE RODEOS?



Tobacco-free rodeos are important for the health and safety of everyone involved.

- The rodeo is a place for parents, city leaders, and rodeo participants to model healthy behavior for children.
- Tobacco product waste is often littered on the ground and poses serious health risks to toddlers and livestock due to ingestion.
- Secondhand smoke is dangerous to all rodeo spectators, participants, and livestock, even in outdoor venues.

### ***It's about Healthy Families, not Hazardous Products***

Attend any rodeo or watch bull riding on television and you'll see children with their families enjoying the tradition together. Many rodeos include events designed to entertain the smallest cow-pokes in the audience. Events like mutton busting and ribbon roping

showcase young cowboys and cowgirls. There are also events at intermissions that are meant to catch the attention of a younger crowd. Intermissions can include events like dogs playing basketball and stick-horse races (an event in which children from the audience can participate). Tobacco-free rodeos protect families from inhaling secondhand smoke and being exposed to spit tobacco use in bleachers, grandstands, and other seating areas. Eliminating tobacco sponsorship at rodeos prevents youth from associating the rodeo with tobacco.

### ***It's about Communities, not Corporations***

Like many other community events, the rodeo is a place for people to come together. People come to reconnect with old friends, cheer on participants from the community, and browse local vendors. The community supports the rodeo and the rodeo would not survive without the community. *Tobacco companies usually have no ties to a community beyond the need to sell tobacco products*, and should not be allowed to soil the community's rodeo tradition simply to promote tobacco products.

### ***It's about Sport, not Spit***

It's been said that rodeo is the toughest eight seconds in sports. Cowboys and cowgirls are strong athletes; they control thousand-pound animals with skill and grace. Tobacco usage can severely harm an athlete's ability to perform and will degenerate their overall health. Rodeo athletes are also role models for the younger generation, and spit tobacco use does not promote healthy behavior for the children in the audience. We need rodeos to provide a good example for our youth that sports and tobacco don't mix. We wouldn't want tobacco to be such a large part of other professional sports, so why should we continue to accept tobacco in the sport of rodeo?



## WHO WILL SUPPORT OUR MESSAGE?

Gathering community support for a tobacco-free rodeo will help you present your policy request to the rodeo board. Some supporters may directly participate in the rodeo and others may be fans of the rodeo. Try contacting these potential supporters in your community:

- Rodeo celebrities like cowboys/cowgirls and rodeo queens/royalty (be sure they do not receive tobacco sponsorship money)
- Local groups and businesses that may participate in or sponsor the rodeo when the tobacco connections are gone
- Rodeo fans and supporters
- Youth Groups (i.e., 4-H and MHSRA)
- Family and youth-serving organizations
- Faith groups
- Doctors, dentists, and other health professionals

## FIND THE TOBACCO SPONSORSHIP

Tobacco company names and products can be seen in many areas of rodeos. When requesting the elimination of sponsorship, be sure to think about these areas:

- Event program ads
- Signage (banners, flags, scoreboards, etc.)
- Sampling/promotional booths
- Animal names (owners are paid to name their animals after tobacco products; names might be announced or listed in the program)
- Prize/purse/scholarship money
- Logos worn by participants
- Title sponsorship (i.e., the Professional Bull Rider's "USST Challenge Tour")
- Local advertising in newspapers
- Tobacco company tents, booths, and semi-trailers (these areas usually offer giveaways, coupons, or other items)

## CREATING TOBACCO-FREE RODEOS

To create a tobacco-free rodeo you must assess the community, build support for your policy, and assist with policy adoption. The Rodeo Toolkit (see Rodeo Resources) has more tips on creating a tobacco-free rodeo.



- 1. Research the Rodeo:** Learn who makes the decisions about the rodeo (it's usually a board made up of community members), who sponsors the rodeo, and who owns the rodeo grounds. Research how often the rodeo board meets and how to get on a meeting agenda. Find out if there are any deadlines or requirements for sponsorship (sponsors may be confirmed months before the rodeo).
- 2. Assess Support:** Find out how the community feels about a tobacco-free rodeo. You can conduct a survey to gauge the level of support for your policy request. Use your survey results when planning your presentation to the rodeo board.
- 3. Develop a Sample Policy:** Decide if you want a policy to eliminate tobacco sponsorship, tobacco use, or both. A comprehensive policy request will help ensure that the decision makers are considering a strong policy. Include rationale for the request, facilities/areas you would like included, and recommendations for enforcement. See the enclosed sample policies for help on creating your policy.
- 4. Build Policy Support:** Begin contacting potential supporters (see "Who Will Support Our Message?" for ideas). Gather letters of support, petition signatures, and other proof of support. Hold your own Tobacco-Free Rodeo event at a local park with activities for all community members (i.e., stick-horse races, face painting, etc.). Find community organizations that are able to replace tobacco sponsorship dollars with their own money.
- 5. Find a Champion:** While building support in the community, begin to build relationships and support with rodeo board members. If you or other supporters know a board member, begin by conducting an informal interview with him/her about your policy request. Try to hold informal and educational meetings with as many board members as you can to explain why a tobacco-free rodeo is important.
- 6. Get on the Agenda:** Contact the board and indicate your interest in making a formal request for a tobacco-free rodeo policy at their upcoming meeting. Determine when and where meetings are held and how much time you will have to give your presentation. Ask about deadlines to give materials to board members.
- 7. Plan your Presentation:** Determine who is going to speak on behalf of your group and what they are going to say. Short testimonials from youth, parents, and other supportive organizations will help demonstrate the need for a tobacco-free rodeo. Invite other supporters to attend the meeting to show their support.
- 8. Make your Presentation and Assist with Policy Development:** Present the information that your group planned in step 7. Be ready to respond to questions that the board might have. After your presentation, provide the board with any additional information that they need to make a decision. Attend any remaining meetings.
- 9. Assist with Policy Implementation and Promote the Message:** Show your appreciation for the board's support by publicly recognizing their efforts. Assist with signage and notification. Promote the policy to the community so they know they have a tobacco-free rodeo to look forward to!
- 10. If the Board is Not Ready to Pass a Comprehensive Policy:** Propose that the rodeo designate special events like "Family Day" or "Kids Day" as days that are free of tobacco use and sponsorship.



### QUESTIONS TO ASK POLICY MAKERS

- What do tobacco companies want with our community? We may get a scoreboard, but the tobacco company gets access to our youth.
- Would we allow this type of sponsorship at other sporting events?
- Doesn't our community deserve a healthy and safe rodeo?
- What kind of role modeling do our kids see if we allow tobacco use and sponsorship?
- Secondhand smoke can deter people from attending an event (particularly families, the elderly, and anyone with asthma or respiratory problems). Shouldn't the entire community be able to enjoy the rodeo?



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