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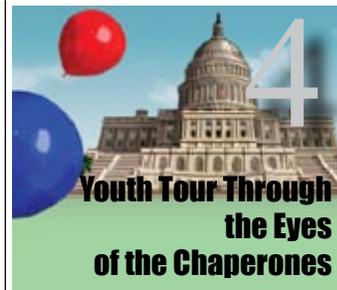


Benefit  
Bunko  
Tournament  
for Cancer-Stricken  
IEC Employee



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Rodeos and  
Reformation



Youth Tour Through  
the Eyes  
of the Chaperones

## Prisoners Build New Lives When Building Rodeo Arena

*"It's the broncs and the blood,  
It's the steers and the mud,  
And they call the thing rodeo."  
-- Garth Brooks' single 'Rodeo'*

It's thousands of people and thousands of dollars, it's genuine cowpokes and wannabe cowboys, it's hot August evenings, and cool family fun.

In this case, it's the annual Pawnee Bill Memorial Rodeo.

Held each August, the rodeo traditionally brings in as many as 10,000 people to the Pawnee Lakeside Arena.

For three evenings each summer, experienced cowboys and cowgirls – along with the not-so-experienced – show off their skills in bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, calf roping, steer wrestling, bull riding and barrel racing.

These serious competitions are interspersed with fun and amusing activities such as wild cow milking, calf scrambles, the daring Mexican sweat, and the antics of famed rodeo clowns to entertain the capacity crowd.

Now in it's 23rd year, the rodeo is highly anticipated by area residents and rodeo competitors alike.

But the true story of the rodeo isn't found in roping a calf the quickest or staying on a bronc the longest. It's found in how the arena itself came to be.

"We had been holding the rodeo at the (Pawnee County) fairgrounds since it began in 1986," explains Ronnie Jestes, chairman of the Pawnee Bill Memorial Rodeo Committee. "But we outgrew the fairgrounds and needed to move somewhere that had a bigger facility and more room for parking and

things like that."

Pawnee was trying to enhance the area around the city lake, so in 2004 the committee decided to move the rodeo to 30 acres west of town, past the famed bath house and the golf course.

Choosing one of the old airport's grass landing strips, they decided that is where the new arena should be built.

But time was of the essence; they had only about three months to design and build the arena before the rodeo was to take place. That wasn't enough time to line up someone to design the arena and to hire contractors.

Pawnee County Sheriff Roger Price offered a solution. "I don't believe in letting prisoners sit up there (in the county jail) and mildew," he says. So he suggested some of the 'guests of the county' be used to build the arena.

He interviewed some of the prisoners, learning which ones had skills the committee could use, and who was willing to be trusted with the unique opportunity he was offering.

"Most of those guys were incarcerated on drug charges or charges like burglary that were drug related."

For most of the 18 prisoners who were 'hired' to build the arena, the opportunity was life-altering.

Taking them at their word that they could be trusted, Price took the prisoners, who ranged in age from 19 to 55 years old, to the site every day. Working off a design someone simply drew in the dirt, the group worked 12 to 14 hours every day

*Continued on page 3.*

# Summertime Blues

by Jack Clinkscale, General Manager

Although it is a great song, I've often wondered how anyone could ever be blue in the summer. I absolutely love the summer. Long days with great activities seemingly every week make even the heat and humidity bearable. Some gush about their love of the four seasons and I shake my head. I would like a long spring, followed by a longer summer, followed by short fall, and three days of winter. Of course, I could move to such a climate, but those areas seem to be inhabited by too many squirrels and a modest home costs a million dollars or more.

As I write this, we have just completed the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show and the glorious 5th of July celebration in Cleveland, the Pawhuska Cavalcade is just starting, and the Pawnee Bill Rodeo is fast approaching. With activities like these, who could be blue? With rising fuel prices, we can enjoy these great events and many others with just a short drive. We do indeed live in a great area.

With the long days of summer, most of us spend many more hours outdoors. Unfortunately, we are also exposed to the sometimes harsh realities of Mother Nature. While we have been blessed this

year with abundant rainfall, we have also seen some tremendous thunderstorms which damaged our electric system. If you see a downed power line, STAY AWAY. Never assume the line is dead; consider it hot and give us a call.

A young boy recently saw Clara Eulert, our member services representative. He remembered Clara from the electric safety demonstration she had given at his school. He told her of a downed line he had seen in an alley in town. He was even able to

provide her with the address and exact location. Clara contacted our on-call crew and they found that the line was a cable TV line. While it wasn't an electric line, I was impressed by the actions of the young man. He did not approach the line, he did exactly what he had learned and contacted us. We can all learn a lesson from the actions of this young man.

Have a happy, and above all, a safe summer.

## Benefit Bunko Tournament

For IEC employee

Luana Alexander

Saturday, August 2 2 p.m.  
Cleveland Community Center

Registration is \$25 per person

Silent dessert auction



Luana is battling a reoccurrence of cancer. Proceeds from the tournament will help with the living expenses for her and her family while she receives treatment at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

# THE LAMP

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## Arena...cont'd. from page 1.

constructing and welding the arena, chutes, and bleachers.

Equipment, supplies and machinery were donated, Price says. "This became a community project."

As the arena began to take shape, a change was taking shape in the trustees also.

"Now they had a project, a purpose, I guess you could say. And they began to take pride in their work. They gave me their word when we first started the project and they kept it. They earned my continued trust and my respect, and they began to respect themselves again," says Price.

"They kind of disciplined themselves and made sure everyone carried their weight and did their job."

Price worked the trustees each day, but made arrangements for them to attend what he called 'Cowboy Church' on Sunday mornings.

"Sometimes we'd have a minister or sometimes we'd just sing gospel songs," says then-trustee Shea Brien.

"Working on the arena had a real impact on us," he says. "I think most of those guys were basically good people, and were like me – we just made some bad choices.

"Being in jail and working on the arena made me realize the mistakes I'd made and that I didn't want to live my life like that."

Brien says his incarceration, plus

working on the arena and attending the Cowboy Church services, helped him turn his life around.

"After that I was ready to change my life," he says. "I was ready to ask for forgiveness."

Brien's first marriage failed and he lost his children prior to his incarceration. But today he has remarried, and has custody of his children. He is employed in the construction business around Pawnee, but most importantly, he has regained his self-respect and the respect of the community.

"These guys turned their lives around and that wasn't easy," says Jestes, who is an alcohol and drug counselor for Pawnee's Community Action Program when he isn't working with the rodeo committee.

Price says he's proud of the men who built the arena and managed to complete the project in 88 days, just in time for the rodeo.

He says each of them completed his time in the Pawnee County Jail, and some went on to the State Penitentiary,



**Pawnee Lakeside Arena**

"but none of them has been incarcerated since then that I know of," he says.

This year the rodeo is August 7, 8, 9, with events starting at 8:00 each evening. It's a fun time in Pawnee that kicks off on Wednesday, August 6 when cowboys drive about 100 head of cattle down Main Street as the conclusion to the annual 50-mile cattle drive. There will be a team roping event and barbecue at the arena Wednesday evening, and a parade downtown Saturday morning.

The rodeo grounds offer a playground for kids, and hookups for campers, and rodeo attendees can do a little boot scootin' at the nightly dance.

Jestes and Price continue to work the rodeo each year, and Brien says he usually goes. Sometimes he's there as a participant – he's thinking about being a team member in the wild cow milking contest this year – but he's always there as a free man; one who acknowledges his mistakes and is just as quick to point out his reformation and the lessons he learned building a rodeo arena one hot Oklahoma summer.

Brien and the other trustees may not wear white hats, but they have earned the respect of Jestes, Price and a great many other folks by admitting their mistakes, paying their debt and now contributing to society – characteristics of true cowboys.



*Sheriff Roger Price (front row, center) is proud of the work these trustees did in building the arena. Then-trustee Shea Brien (front row, third from the right) leads a productive life now, and sometimes participates in the rodeo.*

# Youth Tour '08: The Trip of a Lifetime

by Clara Eulert  
IEC Youth Tour Coordinator

My husband Larry and I were invited by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) to be two of seven chaperones for this year's Youth Tour. Meredith Treat of Pawnee and Matthew Parker of Fairfax who won IEC's Youth Tour contest joined 67 other amazing young people who were winners of their electric cooperatives' Youth Tour contests for a whirl-wind tour of Washington D.C.

Youth Tour is rewarding, inspiring, surprising and extremely fun.

Rewarding in that Youth Tour winners visit places and do things the "average tourist" does not. Our winners attended an exclusive congressional summit with Oklahoma Congressmen John Sullivan, Dan Boren and Frank Lucas. The winners engaged them in a two-hour conversation about issues that affect them.

Inspiring to see the pride and care our military display in their duties to guard the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery and the respect invoked on the faces of our students understanding what these and other soldiers have done and are doing for them at this moment.

Surprising that 69 complete strangers meet in Oklahoma City and within hours are friends for life. Surprising that 69 students can all fit on the Albert Einstein Memorial. Surprising that you can take the "Hope Diamond" home with you if

# RECIPE



## Summer Fruit Salad with Lemon and Honey Syrup

### Syrup:

1 cup water  
1/3 cup honey  
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice  
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

### Salad:

3 cups chopped peeled cantaloupe  
2 cups seedless grapes  
1 1/2 cups sweet cherries, pitted, halved (1/2 lb.)  
1 1/2 cups chopped, peeled peaches (2 peaches)  
6 fresh figs, quartered  
4 apricots, quartered and pitted (about 1/2 lb.)  
1/2 cup chopped fresh mint

To prepare syrup, combine first 4 ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium, and cook until mixture is reduced to 1/4 cup (about 15 minutes).

To prepare salad, place cantaloupe and the next 5 ingredients (cantaloupe through apricots) in a large bowl. Pour syrup over fruit; toss gently to coat. Cover and chill 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Toss with mint just before serving.

you know which gift shop to visit in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

Extremely fun; dancing with 1500 Youth Tour winners from 44 states while cruising the Potomac at sunset aboard a three-deck yacht. Eating pizza on the parade grounds before the U.S. Marine Corp Sunset Parade near the enormous Iwo Jima Memorial. Making their debut as a newscaster at the newly-opened Newseum and sharing

their tape with the world on YouTube.

Youth Tour is all these things and so very much more. Never before have I felt more

aware of how blessed I am to be an American as when watching one of our students rushing to procure the Vietnam Wall War Memorial etching paper from a docent to rub his grandfather's name on the wall before the rain started. Honored that those soldiers would fight for my freedoms and blessed that my husband had made it home from Vietnam.

Upon returning, Treat stated, "It was truly an awesome adventure. I now have a deeper respect for my country and realize the prices paid for freedom."

Matthew Parker of Fairfax remarked, "The tour of Arlington National Cemetery and the changing of the guard was the most memorable experience of the trip."

Next year when I visit your school to invite you new juniors to participate in the essay contest, remember what you have read here and give your best effort.

There will be two more winners in the junior class next year. Will you be one of them?

*Matthew Parker and Merideth Treat in Washington, D.C.*

