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Estes Park's Rooftop Rodeo Named National 2008 Small Rodeo of the Year

December 4, 2008

For the second time in three years, Estes Park's Rooftop Rodeo has been honored as Small Outdoor Rodeo of the Year by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA). The award was presented at the PRCA's Award Banquet Dec. 3 at the South Point Hotel in Las Vegas, NV. The festivities were part of the 2008 National Finals Rodeo.

Bo Winslow, manager of the Events Department and The Fairgrounds at Stanley Park, accepted the award along with Rooftop Rodeo Committee President Howell Wright and long-time committee member Don Cunningham. Guests at the banquet numbered more than 1,000.

"As I waited to find out who won I felt like my heart was going to leap out of my chest. When they announced that Estes Park had won, well that really got it beating. I have to say it is great to be honored by your peers and the professionals in the industry," said Winslow.

Wright shared Winslow's excitement. "This award is given to a committee who works tirelessly all year to put on what is recognized as the best small professional rodeo in America. I want to emphasize the term professional. Many folks do not realize that Estes Park has a professional sports event and in this case we have just won the Super Bowl of professional rodeo. This is a big deal!"

The Rooftop Rodeo roped in top honors over four other finalists: three rodeos in Texas, as well as last year's winner – Clear Lake, SD. The Rodeo of the Year is selected by votes from PRCA contestants, stock contractors, announcers, rodeo secretaries, timers, clowns, specialty acts and rodeo committees from across the nation.

Estes Park's 83-year-old event has been ranked in the top five in its category the past six years, taking home Rodeo of the Year honors in 2003, 2006 and now 2008.

The PRCA recognizes four rodeo categories: Small Outdoor, Medium Outdoor, Large Outdoor and Large Indoor. A rodeo's size is determined by the amount of added purse money awarded to the contestants. The Small Outdoor category is the largest group and encompasses rodeos located throughout the nation.

In accepting this year's award, Winslow thanked the Rooftop Rodeo Committee for its 365-day-a-year commitment to the event; the Town of Estes Park for its ongoing support, all of the local sponsors, stock contractors Hank and Lori Franzen of Powder River Rodeo Productions, announcer Chad Nicholson, Dodge Rodeo, U.S. Smokeless Tobacco for providing its video scoreboard, the rodeo contestants, and all of the rodeo's many fans.

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This is the second award received by the Rooftop Rodeo in less than a month. In November it was named Small Rodeo of the Year by the Mountain States Circuit at its finals competition in Denver. The MSC represents rodeos in Wyoming and Colorado.

The 2009 Rooftop Rodeo kicks off with a parade Tuesday, July 7, with nightly PRCA rodeos July 7 through 12. Each performance features PRCA bareback riding, team roping, steer wrestling, saddle bronc riding, tie down roping, barrel racing, bull riding. Tickets go on sale April 1.

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