

Ram Rodeo returns this weekend

By **Sam Odrowski**

Calling all cowboys and cowgirls!

The Ram Rodeo Tour is kicking off its 24th season this weekend (August 28-29), with the Orangeville Fairgrounds as its first stop, featuring all of the usual events that attendees enjoy.

The two-day rodeo has bronc riding, barrel racing, bull riding, pole bending, off kilter equine trick riding entertainment, and a free kids rodeo with the Canadian Cowgirls, which is the country's top precision drill team. A tailgate party with live music by John Michael Green can be enjoyed by attendees as well.

"We're thrilled to bring the rodeo back, I think this is the first real live event in the Headwaters area to be kicking back off, so that's exciting to us," said Ross Millar, President of the Ram Rodeo Tour.

"The cowboys and cowgirls, there's close to 200 of them that are coming to town and nobody's more excited than they are to perform," he added, noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented them from competing.

This year's rodeo is raising money for Tuff Therapeutic Riding Foundation, which is based out of Mono, and offers horseback riding lessons to at-risk youth. The program serves children who are referred from child protection and mental health organizations within Dufferin, Caledon, Peel, and Toronto.

This year's event is being called the Headwaters Orangeville Ram Rodeo as the team that creates the Grand Valley Rodeo has joined forces with Orangeville.

Millar said he's thrilled about how many sponsors they have this year from across the Headwaters region.

He noted that one of the challenges with respect to preparing for the rodeo has been training the animals and getting them in shape to perform.

"We're very proud of our animals, we are proud of our bulls and our bucking horses and, of course, the ladies barrel race is really exciting. Just the speed and the power of those horses as they race around, I think the crowd enjoys," Millar remarked.

In accordance with Ontario's current COVID-19 guidelines, the rodeo is able to have 75 per cent capacity, which totals 1,500 seats. Millar said the Ram Rodeo Team is excited to see tickets are moving fast with over 750 already sold at the start of this week.

He told the Citizen that he encourages everyone hoping to attend the rodeo to buy their tickets in advance. Those who buy their tickets prior to the event will have preference over those who try to purchase one at the door.

"They're guaranteed to get in if we're at our capacity," said Millar.

Tickets are available for purchase at Orangeville Chrysler (207163 Hwy 9, Orangeville), Hockley General Store (994227 Mono-Adjala Townline), and Circle K (24 Main St, Grand Valley).

Tickets can also be purchased online at: www.orangevilleramrodeo.com/2018/01/purchase-tickets.html.