

Happy 4th of July 2020



2019 & 2020 Sweetheart Jaden Doak

**Willits
FRONTIER DAYS**

Willits Frontier Days board cancels parade and other annual events to be health code compliant, still hopes to hold October rodeo

Originally published in Willits Weekly on May 21, 2020

"Nothing hurts me worse than to not have our regular 4th of July," said Willits Frontier Days past president and long-time festivities participant Lee Persico. "I've been riding in the parade every year since I was 6 months old, that's 84 years. But this year, it's just going to have to be different."

Persico shares sentiments with the entire Willits Frontier Days board who had to make the hard decision last week at their May board meeting to go ahead and cancel the parade, hometown celebration, horse show, carnival, anthem contest and other usual

activities in order to remain compliant with the health codes and local, state and federal guidelines.

The rodeo, however, has been officially postponed, allowing the group to hope things change enough in 2020 to allow the

Ranch Rodeo event, usually held in October, to take place, and therefore keeping the coveted "Longest Continuous Running Rodeo in California" title accurate.

"This is not what any of us want, or wanted to have to do," said Marcy Barry, current Willits Frontier Days vice president. "But we have to. We have to remain compliant under the order, and we will not jeopardize our future events, the use of the grounds, or our ability to get insurance or permits to try and force this to happen this year. It's a real bummer, but it is just what we have to do."

Ignoring the in-place orders and guidelines could put the future of the events entirely at risk. No agency is going to go along with disobeying the orders, and without issuance of a Caltrans permit to close the road, or ABC license to serve alcohol, or general liability insurance for the grounds, and staff, spectator and contestant safety, Willits Frontier Days could be sued into oblivion for any number

of probable problems ... and that's just not wise or reasonable.

"It's not just Willits who is experiencing these event cancellations," reminded Persico. "This event is a massive draw for people all around the state and country, and bringing them here to all be close to one another during this time is irresponsible. There's not even motel rooms available for people to stay in if they did come, they're closed too. I am a part of several horseback trail riding groups who are out in the open, camp out, don't see others for days on end, and even those events are being cancelled."

Persico went on to point out how all of the other state rodeos, events, and fairs have also been cancelled for several of the same concerns shared by the board of Willits Frontier Days.

"The Olympics have even postponed," said Persico. "It would be pound wise and penny foolish to buck the system and try and hold an event during this time. The potential for someone to come here, get people sick, and the lawsuits that would follow made the board have no choice but to reluctantly take this hard position. No other big events are being put on – people need to pay attention to what's going on elsewhere and realize that this is for the best interest of all involved."

"We want to do what we can to get the community open as fast as we can," said Barry. "Part of this is cancelling this year's 4th of July events. We were very careful to say 'postpone' as far as the rodeo was concerned, however, we all want to ensure our title remains for the longest rodeo, but we just can't hold the rest of the events at this time."

In the highly unlikely event that things somehow drastically change come July 4, and everyone will be able to congregate without restrictions, the amount of advance planning needed to take place to put all 17 Willits Frontier Days events together is impossible at the last minute. A decision had to be made now.

Forging ahead and being charged for insurance policies, agreements with stock contractors, purses for the rodeo events, ordering buckles, a Sweetheart saddle, printing a program, buying radio time, not to mention mundane things like securing port-a-potties and dumpsters, all takes money that would not be recouped without an event.

"It would be like writing a check and throwing it into the wind," said Persico. "It would be a huge waste and hit to the bank account, especially without alcohol sales at or ticket sales in advance of the events."

The actual 4th of July isn't cancelled, remember. This year will just involve a different way to celebrate the holiday. Have a barbecue at your home. Visit the cemeteries and learn about the veterans who lived in the area and served our country. Make a donation to the American Legion. Make a video to stream of your family raising an American flag and saying the Pledge of Allegiance in unison. Send off your voter registration card. Bake an apple pie.

We can all get through this as a community. It's a strange year. True. But if we can all please take a breath, calm down, be nice to one another, do what's asked of us and try and follow the rules, hopefully it will all be over sooner than it would have been able to be otherwise ... and that's really what everyone wants.

A message from the Willits Frontier Days President FRED BARRY

"If we all work together, we'll get through it together," encouraged Fred Barry, Willits Frontier Days president, who has the challenging task of honoring the board's decision to forgo this year's June and July events as required by the coronavirus epidemic.

Usually, June and July are filled with truck pulls, horse shows, hometown celebrations, carnivals and the Sweetheart events, but this year, all have been cancelled to try and keep the community from spreading and contracting the contagious virus – and was done due to the state, county and city's health orders and requirements.

"We absolutely do this with a heavy heart," continued Barry. "We did what we had to do; it was what the state asked our county, and the county asked of our city. We lease the land for the grounds from the City of Willits, and we have a good working relationship to keep the event able to happen every year, as it has for 93 previous years. We cannot jeopardize that, and we cannot put people, and ourselves, at risk."

While all of the events are certainly community traditions, the rodeos that are held on July 3 and 4 are part of Willits' special delineation, with Willits Frontier Days holding the title for "Longest Continuous Running Rodeo in California." Not wanting to put an end to this title, Willits Frontier Days hopes and plans to hold their Ranch Rodeo in October, which will keep a rodeo at the grounds in 2020, keeping truth to the title.

A rodeo, especially one with spectators, will only be possible, however, if steps and precautions are taken to allow more and more business, activities and areas to open up and resume normal operations by then. The Willits Frontier Days board's decision to pause on the summer events is a vital step along that path.

"It is a real bummer; we know more than anyone how disappointing it is to not hold the regular event schedule this year," said Barry. "However, it's more important to us that we are able to keep the future of Frontier Days going, by following the rules we are required to follow. We want to make it to our 100th year – that'll be 2026 – and continue to do the other fun events we have planned – like the concerts."

"The liability is huge if something bad happened," continued Barry. "What if there was an outbreak? What if we held it against the health orders and lost our lease on the property? How can we serve food and drinks without a license issued from the county? What if there was an accident, and we didn't have insurance in place? We can't take the risk. It could set us back so far, and that would be crazy."

"Please, enjoy a different kind of Fourth of July this year," said Barry. "Stay safe, spend time with family – we promise, we'll make it up to everyone next year with an amazing 2021 Willits Frontier Days to come."



Photos by Maureen Moore

Above: Willits Frontier Days President Fred Barry.
Below: Barry stands with wife, Marcy, left, and daughter Danielle.



WILLITS

Back row, from left: Danielle Barry, Tracy Evans,
Karen Cavanaugh, Marcy Barry, Fred Barry,
Bruce Cartwright, Deana Rutledge, Earl Rambauth,
Matt Harbour, Willie England and Alexis England.

Front row: Madison Forrester, Lee Persico,
June Sizemore, Cathy Moorhead, Ron Moorhead, Jeff
Cook, Kera Colvard, Alyssa Colvard and Jaden Doak.

Proud to be the Willits Frontier Days Crew 2020

Photo by
Maureen
Moore





Photos by Marcy Barry

Work Around the Grounds

Even though the traditional June and July events have been cancelled this year, we are still hard at work on the grounds! We've been fixing up one of the serving booths and covering it with Coleman Ranch boards siding, doing structural work at the back of the arena, and we hope to get to rebuild the stairs and catwalk up to the announcers booth, with steel donated by Calvin Harwood.



Photo by
Maureen
Moore

Ranch Rodeo

While the traditional CCPRA rodeo has been postponed from its normal July 3 and 4 dates, plans are in place to still hold our Ranch Rodeo, traditionally done in October, to ensure Willits keeps its coveted "OLDEST CONTINUOUS RODEO CELEBRATION IN CALIFORNIA" slogan and marker in history. Hopefully, gathering in larger groups will be permitted by then, and we can have live attendance at the event. Stay tuned, we miss you!



Past Sweethearts

The two young women who were planning to run for the 2020 title: Madison Forrester, left, and Samantha Arms, right, were hoping to join the roster of past Sweethearts, center.

1926	None	1956	Betty Ann Stansberry Erbes	1989	Dina Pinon Parker	Since COVID-19 cancelled the June/July events, no contest was held for 2020, and 2019 winner Jaden Doak will get to be the first two-term Sweetheart by default.
1927	Marie Schloegel Novaglie	1957	Patricia Moreno Door	1990	Melanie Ulvila	
1928	Martha Warner Kelton	1958	Letha Schumaker Wiley	1991	Lanae Shuster Lamkin	
1929	Lola Butts	1959	Marian Whitely Ross	1992	Amanda Hiatt Hower	
1930	None	1960	Carol Collier McClendon	1993	Amy Ford	
1931	None	1961	Mardi Wilson Hinton	1994	Marta Trevey	
1932	Enola McKenzie Reed	1962	Linda Allen Banks	1995	Tori Nunnemaker Minton	
1933	Betty Akins	1963	Susan Fonsen Neilson	1996	Georgianne Dawson Crosky	
1934	Amy Gardner	1964	Sue Hardaway	1997	Patricia Garrity	
1935	Jemma Pedroncelli Serventi	1965	Sharon Baker Arno	1998	Ileah Leone	
1936	Elizabeth Wendt Ferguson	1966	Leslie Cogburn Scaglione	1999	Mary Garrity	
1937	Alice Gibellini Wade	1967	Joann Schloegel	2000	Olivia Grupp	
1938	Dorce Brown	1968	Clydeen Smith Dick	2001	Katherine Whitby	
1939	Ernistime Casteel DeBoer	1969	Mousey Clatty	2002	Sandi Short	
1940	Evelyn Robley Bergson	1970	Kam Maize LaLaguna	2003	Mattie Pinon	
1941	Pauline Standley Perez	1971	Margaret Smith	2004	Tina Holguin	
1942	Melba Dempsey Lewis	1972	Paulette Wilcott Soudahl	2005	Ashtan Bloomquist	
1943	Ann Cox McGinnis	1973	Jann Clatty Rickey	2006	Darcy Ford	
1944	Anna Ford Hardwick	1974	Kathy Persico Graves	2007	Courtney Figg-Hoblyn	
1945	Lillian Kroh Nolan	1975	Lorraine Soulliere Crabtree	2008	McKenzie Barlow	
1946	Georgia Stovall Welch	1976	Tami Tharp Romberg Mayfield	2009	Lindsey Bowlds	
1947	Anne Crabtree Henderson	1977	Kelly Bielenberg Eoff	2010	Stephanie Standley	
1948	Lillian Kroh Nolan	1978	Julie Canepa Belvin	2011	Riata King	
1949	Betty Mast Campbell	1979	Liz Persico Day	2012	Rachel Belvin	
1950	Wanda Lane Johnston	1980	Cindy Kostanecki Kelly	2013	Lilja Lamkin	
1951	Gretchen Mullen Weber	1981	Stacey Blalack McKinley	2014	Haley Schuck	
1952	Yvonne Dusseau Leever	1982	Caroline Kostanecki Durupt	2015	Caitlyn Forrester	
1953	Claire Huffman Robertson	1983	Saundra DuCross Norman	2016	Halee Reed	
1954	Joan Neary Von Weien	1984	Chrissy Kostanecki	2017	Hailey Riley	
1955	Shirley Merritt Nikolashin	1985	Tracey Ford Moody	2018	Lilah Garman	
		1986	Kristine McBride Tyrrell	2019	Jaden Doak	
		1987	Kim Colwell Lebo	2020	Jaden Doak (No Events)	
		1988	Nicole Persico Kunka			

Photos by
Maureen
Moore

Giving Thanks

Willits Frontier Days is only possible with community support, and every year, dozens of businesses and individuals purchase ads, sponsor events, and much more. Since we had to pause on the traditional process this year, we wanted to give an extra shout out to the businesses who helped make the 2019 event happen. We look forward to everything returning to normal for 2021. Thank you all!

Adventist Health
Howard Memorial
101 Burgers
101 Trailer and RV
Ace Copy
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Bouthillier's Construction
Brad Walton, CPA
Budweiser - Eagle Distributing
Carl's Classics
City of Lights
Coast Hardware
Coldwell Banker Mendo Realty
CS Horsemanship
East Hill Veterinary Clinic
El Mexicano Restaurant
Emerald City
Flying S Hay Sales
Frank R. Howard Foundation
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Services
Garton Tractor, Inc.
Geiger's Long
Valley Market
Grist Creek
Aggregates

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of Commerce
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Willits Weekly
Windsor Mill
Wylatti
Yokum's Body Shop, Inc.

In Our Memory Barbara Taylor

February 5, 1949 - November 24, 2019

Barbara will surely be missed. She and her husband, Cloyd, drove from Arizona every year to stay at the rodeo grounds for at least a month to answer phones, sell tickets and just keep all of us in line. We will miss you, Barbara! Thank you for all that you have done for Willits Frontier Days!

