

# Mustang students jump-start Western Days activity with Stampede

By Traci Chapman,  
Staff Writer

It's the blast heard around the world – or, more specifically, Mustang High School's Bronco Stadium – as hundreds, perhaps thousands, of students each year take part in an event that for many officially kicks off Western Days celebrations.

It's the annual Western Days Stampede, now in its 39th year.

"It's a great, great event that the kids love and so do the organizers, parents and community at large," sponsor Vickie Bailey said. "We are always looking for ways to support the cross-country team, and it's probably our longest-running event, just a great community effort for everyone involved – it's a wonderful opportunity for students to win prizes and spend time with their friends and other children their own age."

Organizers have the long-running event down to a science – races are

broken up into a 5K open fun run and grade-specific 1-mile events for elementary, intermediate and middle school students, with school site physical education teachers, coaches and high school volunteers working with students before the run, getting them excited about taking part, even if there's inclement weather.

Sponsored by Mustang Pacesetters booster club – founded to support Mustang High School's cross-country team – the Stampede gathers hundreds of students from across Mustang Public School District each year. It's a fitting fundraiser for the organization, as area students get up and get active.

## Student Races

Stampede student races are divided into three categories – elementary, intermediate and middle school – with elementary sessions further grouped by grade level. Youth races begin first, as seventh and eighth-graders take the field before 7 a.m. in a combined



-photo by Traci Chapman

**Students flock each year to take part in the Western Days Stampede, a fundraiser sponsored by Mustang Pacesetters, which for many officially kicks off the day's events.**

race that starts immediately after the 5K is launched, Bailey said.

Fifth and sixth-graders approach the starting line by 7:30 a.m., with a 7:45 a.m. race time, while elementary races begin at about 8 a.m. with first grade, running to an approximate 9 a.m. start time for fourth-graders.

For those taking part, the cost is \$15, which includes a T-shirt for all runners who pre-register. Top 10 boys and girls in each grade will earn a medal, Bailey said.

## Open 5k

Registration cost for the 5k is \$25, a race open to everyone, with medals for top three males and females in each age division, as well as trophies for

masters' division's over 40 participants and those aged under 40 years of age, who are part of the open division, Bailey said.

Participants are asked to be on the line at 6:50 a.m. for a 7 a.m. start on a 5K course that mirrors the annual Bronco Gallup. The 5k begins and ends at MHS, Bailey said.

A course map is available online at [www.mustangpacesetters.org](http://www.mustangpacesetters.org).

Parents are not allowed on the field or track, organizers said. Registration can be completed online at [www.mustangpacesetters.org](http://www.mustangpacesetters.org); more information is also available by emailing Bailey at [stampede@mustangpacesetters.org](mailto:stampede@mustangpacesetters.org).

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