

# Business storefronts exhibit Western Days spirit

**By Traci Chapman,  
Staff Writer**

Before the chili is served or the little cowboys show up, before runners get a chance to stampede or cars shine in exhibition, before state Highway 152 becomes a gathering of thousands taking part in a Saturday parade, Mustang businesses have a chance to exhibit the spirit that embodies Western Days in a Friday morning store front decorating contest.

"This is a great way for businesses to take part in Western Days, for them to showcase the whole town's spirit and participation in the event and have a little fun in the process," Mustang Chamber of Commerce CEO Renee Peerman said. "The city loves to see local business get involved by decorating their store front and helping to make Mustang as 'western' as possible for everyone to see when they come to town that weekend."

Participants historically decorate the outside of their businesses, over

the years extending those decorations not only inside but encompassing elaborate skits and costumes for employees who get caught up in the annual celebration. Businesses' efforts must embody the annual theme – this year "Mustang – 50 Years Strong" – and vie for prizes in three categories based on number of employees, as well as a final best dressed employee contest.

"Judges look for the use of props, live animation - if a business wants to utilize that - creativity, of course, and how the idea goes with the annual theme," Peerman said. "Store front decoration not only allows a business to promote itself when visitors come in for Western Days, it also shows how big the event is throughout the entire community."

Four of last year's five judges – Mustang police chief Rob Groseclose, Sen. Paul Rosino, Parks and Recreation director Jean Heasley and fire chief Craig Carruth – return to critique the entries, joined this year by Rep. Brian



*-photo by Traci Chapman*

**Area businesses are the true pioneers each Western Days, as the store front decorating contest becomes the first event of the weekend at 10 a.m. Friday.**

Hill, while Fish Window Cleaning returns as activity sponsor.

More information and event applications can be found online at [www. mustangwesterndays.com](http://www.mustangwesterndays.com).

[com/applications/](http://www.mustangwesterndays.com/applications/); anyone who has questions or is interested in the contest may also call Mustang Chamber of Commerce at 405-376-2758.

# Western Days rodeo launched Mustang's signature celebration

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It was less than a decade after Mustang officially became Mustang, the city, and a group of residents decided it was time to celebrate their community with a special event, something that would withstand the test of time and appeal to future generations.

In looking toward that future, they gazed back at their past – finding a key to what now is the city's ultimate celebration, a two-day event that those in the planning stages 43 years ago could scarcely imagine.

And it all started with a rodeo, this year marking its own 43rd anniversary.

While the Western Days of today is a multiday outing encompassing nearly every aspect of the community, the open rodeo conceived and nurtured through the years by Mustang Rodeo Club illustrates in many ways the Mustang of yesterday – and some of



*-photo by Alan Chapman*

the most important aspects of the city, even as it grows and evolves with each passing year, organizers said.

It's an event that combines the city's small-town feel with the vigor of today's youth and a love for riding, exhibition and fun, Mustang Chamber

of Commerce CEO Renee Peerman said.

"It's one of the most popular events for people, something that really embodies the spirit of Mustang and of Western Days," Peerman said. "It's always full and always hopping."

The two-night event, which begins at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday – this year Sept. 6 and 7 – the rodeo offers something for everyone, Peerman and rodeo chairman Jeff Hooper said.

"It's something that calls to people from across the spectrum, and it's a wonderful showcase for our local equestrians, as well as several other groups and individuals who travel to Mustang to take part in the rodeo," she said.

Registration for the event begins at 6 p.m. each evening. Advance tickets cost \$8 for adults and \$4 for children; at the gate, prices are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Cornerstone Bank, FAA Credit Union, Mustang Chamber of Commerce, Mustang Roundup Club and YNB Mustang are among advance ticket sellers.

More information about the rodeo is available online at [www. mustangwesterndays.com](http://www.mustangwesterndays.com) or by calling Rafter D Rodeo Co. at 580-512-4682.