



Aaron Watson



The Beach Boys



Tone Loc



Hot Chelle Rae

Buckle up for HOT Fair fun

By Jessica Chia

The Heart O' Texas Fair and Rodeo will be at the Extraco Events Center this month like never before. While the midway rides, livestock show and rodeo return as always, the Beach Boys, Hot Chelle Rae and MercyMe headline a new HOT Concert Series

in the Extraco Coliseum, bringing big names in classic rock 'n' roll, today's pop music and contemporary Christian music to Waco. HOT Fair and Rodeo President and CEO Wes Allison explained that the new additions to this year's entertainment

were made in response to feedback from last year's fairgoers and the changing demographics of the Waco community and entertainment itself. "We realized that our audience was looking for something more, something you can't get anywhere else," Allison



Downtown parade

said. "We're no longer a rural community. It's very important to reach out and diversify."

Tickets for each night of the HOT Concert Series are sold separately, but include general admission to the fair, which runs Oct. 4-13.

The fair's Bud Light Music Stage will cater to country fans, featuring performers such as Aaron Watson, Kevin Fowler, Curtis Grimes, Reckless Kelly and the Casey Donahew Band.

In keeping with the goal of diversifying the fair's entertainment, '90s rap artist Tone Loc also will perform on the Bud Light Music Stage.

Other attractions for fairgoers include seeing comedy hypnotist Catherine Hickland, who played the role of Lindsay Rappaport on ABC's "One Life to Live," on the fair's family stage, getting an autograph from Penelope Menchaca, host of Telemundo's dating game show "12 Corazones" on La Ley Day, or watching a professional film stunt.

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association's All American ProRodeo Finals will run Oct. 7-13 in the coliseum, featuring events such as bull riding, barrel racing and bareback riding.

"It's the only championship rodeo in Texas," Allison said. "We're very proud of it."



Championship rodeo

The cowboys may be competing for a title, but rodeo spectators have a chance to win as well.

"During the rodeo, we give away gas cards, we give away cash," Allison said. "We're trying to get the crowd involved in what we're doing. We want to put out the best product we can put out there."

The annual parade on Oct. 2 in downtown Waco kicks off the fair. The parade starts at 6 p.m., beginning at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Franklin Avenue and traveling along Franklin to Ninth Street.

Family-gearred fair staples like the midway and carnival, as well as a children's petting zoo will be offered. Competitive events include the livestock show, creative arts, academic rodeo, calf scramble, and a newly expanded mutton bustin' contest.

This year, the mutton bustin' competition will consist of preliminaries and semifinals held during the week in the Kids Zone tent and a championship Oct. 13 in the coliseum.



Mutton bustin'

"The champion gets the same buckle that the big boys do," Allison said. "Basically, we've been able to double the number of participants to let more kids and families participate. Mutton bustin' is the No. 1 attraction that people like to see."

The second annual pancake breakfast and church service will be Sunday morning, which Allison said had a good turnout last year despite rainy weather.

"It's a way for us to give back a little bit," he said. "We'll plan for pancakes for

1,000 ... kind of while supplies last."

For the duration of the fair, traditional fair eats will be available, alongside healthier alternatives, he said.

"The stereotypical fair will either change or it will die," Allison said. "Tradition is tradition, but you have to move forward with the times. It only happens once a year and we want folks to be excited."

HOT Fair & Rodeo

General-admission tickets cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. HOT Concert Series tickets are separate and priced by seat location.

Parking at the Extraco Events Center costs \$5 per vehicle. Free parking is at the Bosque Square Shopping Center (State Highway 6 and Bosque Boulevard) with free shuttle service on the Rodeo Express bus.

More information: online at hotfair.com or call 776-1660.

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