



**Ellensburg Rodeo and Hall of Fame Boards to Announce New Museum Partnership at Fitterer's Furniture Press Conference and Celebration, March 6 from 5-7 pm**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

On March 6<sup>th</sup> from 5-7, during the First Friday Art Walk, there will be a Fitterer's Furniture gathering to announce the partnership of the Ellensburg Rodeo and Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame Associations to build a permanent home for both groups.

The partnership was made official last month. Ellensburg Rodeo President Gene Dana announced before a sold-out crowd at the Ellensburg Rodeo Queen Coronation, "It is our intention to establish a permanent home for both groups, preferably at the north entrance to the (Kittitas Valley) event center. We are working with our county officials on the master plan for the future of the rodeo arena grandstands and surrounding areas."

The Ellensburg Rodeo Board was founded in 1923 and has, for nearly a century, staged one of the premier rodeos in all of North America. Since 1923, the greatest cowboys and cowgirls in the history of the sport have competed in Ellensburg's arena.

The Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame Association (ERHOF) was founded in 1997, to assist in celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ellensburg Rodeo. Since then, ERHOF has inducted over 75 prominent rodeo participants, preserved their mementoes, hosted annual fundraisers, and established a permanent museum fund. ERHOF has collected, stored, and displayed saddles and tack, memoirs, photographs, posters, jewelry, buckles, programs, costumes, books and magazines, ephemera, and other historical artifacts from the Ellensburg Rodeo donated by national competitors and local participants, organizers, and their families. The Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame Association's goal has been to build a permanent Hall of Fame and museum of rodeo history in Ellensburg, open to community members and tourists on a year-round basis.

As ERHOF's search for a museum home coincided with the Ellensburg Rodeo Association's search for a larger facility, the two groups began discussions resulting in this partnership.

The Rodeo and Hall of Fame Boards are currently working with the County Commissioners on the possibility of purchasing land close to the rodeo grounds (SE corner of University Way and Alder) to

build a joint building. They aim to have a permanent home by spring of 2017. In the meantime this could mean a temporary joint location or to be determined.

“Work is ongoing between a Kittitas County advisory group of citizens, organizations and event center users and a consultant to develop a plan for improvements to the event center that includes county fairgrounds and the rodeo arena,” Gene Dana said.

The March 6 Fitterer’s Furniture gathering will be held in conjunction with the voting for the 2015 rodeo poster. There will be historical displays and music.

This year’s rodeo runs from September 4 – September 7, 2015. More information about its many competitions and events can be found online at [www.ellensburgrodeo.com](http://www.ellensburgrodeo.com).

*The Ellensburg Rodeo is one of the “old rodeos” and has earned its place as one of America’s Top 10 professional rodeos. The Ellensburg Rodeo hosts the World Finale of PRCA’s Xtreme Bulls Tour. Started in 1923 with the same volunteer spirit that still “fuels the fire” of today’s volunteers, the rodeo has grown from a local competition among ranch hands to the Professional event of today with over 600 contestants and prize money in excess of \$400,000!*

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