

Coast Bull Riders Saddling up to Benefit JCCSC at Lucedale Rodeo

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Gautier, MS- Everyone likes a rodeo, or at least that's what Joey Williams believes. Williams is a man from Escatawpa with a thick southern accent and a passion for bull riding and barrel racing. He's one of the people responsible for making this year's Lucedale Rodeo a success.

"I'm in charge of getting the bulls there, the barrels, the draw," said Williams, "I do it because I love it, and because it's a good thing to do."

For the first time ever, all proceeds from the Lucedale Rodeo, held October 19th and 20th during the Lucedale Fair, will benefit the Jackson County Community Services Coalition. JCCSC Director Jim Yancey is excited to add the rodeo to the list of the non-profit's annual fundraisers.

"We've had bass tournaments and motorcycle runs, but never a rodeo," Yancey said, "As long as they don't put me on one of those bulls, I think this may turn into a big event for us and the community."

So maybe Yancey doesn't want to fall off of a belligerent bull, but he says the money raised from spectators awaiting other riders' misfortunes will help fund the coalition's many programs like drug prevention and resiliency training in the schools, Hurricane Katrina rebuilding efforts, and mental health counseling.

Yancey says that the rodeo wouldn't be possible had one of his employees Crystal Henley not gotten involved. "Crystal has booked the arena, made the posters, arranged the security, and booked the vendors."

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians via First American Market Works is sponsoring the Coalition through the Lucedale Rodeo and has donated \$10,000 for the event to give to the Jackson County Community Services Coalition. It's the second time the Choctaws have donated to JCCSC and General Manager for First American Market Works, Jack Wilkerson says it won't be the last.

"The Coalition is doing work that no one else is doing in Jackson County, and it's hard for them to get the money they need to keep these important programs alive. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians donated money to the Coalition before and they will continue to help fund non-profits like the Coalition because they do such great work," Wilkerson said.

The Lucedale Rodeo starts at 7pm at the George County Covered Arena on Old Highway 63 in Lucedale on both Friday, October 19th and Saturday, October 20th. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 6-12. Children under 6 years of age experience the excitement of the rodeo for free. Besides the bull riding and barrel racing, there will also be entertainment for kids like junior bull riding and goat dressing. Late bull riders can sign up on the day of the rodeo. For more information, call Crystal Henley at 228-219-2886.

If you attend, keep your eyes out for Joey Williams. After he's finished managing the bull riding at the rodeo, he says he'll sit down and enjoy it. "I like keeping up with who got rode and who got throwed," Williams laughed.

