



MANDAN Independence Day GAZETTE



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

There are hundreds of events scheduled for this year's Independence Day celebration in Mandan. And we've listed all of them so you won't miss out on any of the fun during three days of entertainment, starting on July 2.

page 2



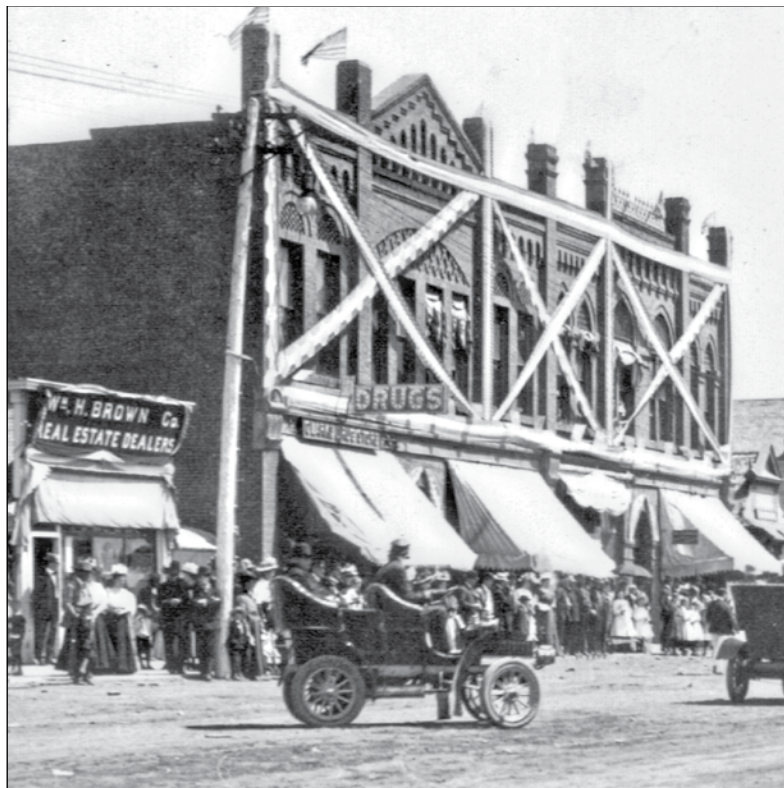
WORLD'S LONGEST YMCA

Parade organizers expect to break another world record this year. First it was the world's longest Chicken Dance. Then it was the world's longest Twist (Chubby Checker). Now, get ready to join the world's longest YMCA (Village People) dance line.

page 7



For a full lineup of the parade floats and participants, use a smartphone to scan the code above or visit www.mandanparade.com. Check the website regularly for additional updates on Fourth of July events in Mandan. And make sure to join the conversation on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/MandanParade>



The Mandan Independence Day Parade dates back to 1881. This undated photo shows what the parade looked like in the early 20th Century.



The parade tradition continues as strong as ever, as shown by this photo taken during the 2011 parade.

Reliving the magnificent history of the Mandan Parade

By Marc Conrad

On July Fourth, spectators standing atop the hill on Mandan's West Main Street will view a magnificent spectacle that only appears once a year: the Mandan Independence Day Parade, which will stretch from The Strip on the east end of town back to the hill on the west end that offers the incredible overview of people, floats and animals.

The Independence Day Parade begins at 10:30 a.m. on the Strip, 11 a.m. at Main

Street and Memorial Highway, and 11:30 a.m. at Main Street and Collins Avenue.

Marlo Anderson, who has been involved in organizing the parade for the past 21 years, believes that the Independence Day Parade is likely the largest in North Dakota and surrounding states, which includes South Dakota, Montana and Minnesota. This year's parade has about 175 entries, less than the record set in 1989, the state's centennial year, when more than 200 floats and other entries were featured.

The Mandan parade is one of the granddaddies of Fourth of July parades. Mandan initiated the parade in 1881, making it perhaps the oldest parade in the state. There was only one year that the Independence Day Parade wasn't held in Mandan. That was 1889; the year North Dakota became a state. The parade was held in Bismarck then, but the annual rodeo was still held in Mandan.

Continued on page 13

Mandan Independence Day Celebration Schedule of Events

Monday, July 2

8 a.m. – Slack rodeo competition at Dacotah Centennial Park – free admission

11:30 a.m. – Miss Rodeo Mandan Pageant Luncheon at Seven Seas Inn – admission \$15 in advance or \$17 at the door; make a reservation by calling 701-527-4324

5 p.m. – Cumulus Radio Rodeo Feed – free with rodeo ticket; Inflation games for kids

7 p.m. – Bike Decorating Contest at Mandan Depot (401 W Main Street) – sponsored by Ressler Siding & Window; open to non-motorized bikes; judging based on originality; age groups of 7 & under and 8-16 years; prizes of \$50 for 1st place, \$25 for 2nd place and \$10 for 3rd place in each age group

7:30 p.m. – Mandan PRCA Rodeo Family Night Rodeo Performance at Dacotah Centennial Park – \$2 off each child's ticket (12 & under) with purchase of an adult ticket

8 p.m. – Silver Dollar Street Dance with live music by Dirty Blond



Many of the participants in the Independence Day Parade choose to ride horses instead of motorized vehicles to commemorate the past and celebrate what might be the most well-known rodeo in the region.

1 p.m. until 3 p.m. – Covered Wagon and Pony Rides on Main Street near Art in the Park

4 p.m. – Moose Lodge Pitchfork Fondue (111 11th Avenue NE)

5 p.m. – American Legion Baseball – Mandan A's vs. Bismarck Reps; and 7:30 p.m., Mandan Chiefs vs. Bismarck Governors

6 p.m. – Doll and Pet Parade on Main Street by Dykshoorn Park – open to children 11 years & younger; bring bikes, wagons, dolls and pets

7 p.m. – All Class Reunion at Heritage Park and Main Street

7:30 p.m. – Mandan PRCA Rodeo Patriot Night Rodeo Performance at Dacotah Centennial Park – wear red, white and blue to support the U.S. military; auction of red, white & blue guitar and "Studs & Guns" raffle, with proceeds going to the Wounded Warrior Project

8 p.m. – Silver Dollar Street Dance with live music by Dirty Blond

8 p.m. – Lonesome Dove Rodeo Dance with live music by EZ Street

Tuesday, July 3

7 a.m. – KC Pancake Breakfast at Heritage Park

9 a.m. until 9 p.m. – Art in the Park at Dykshoorn Park and Heritage Park on West Main Street

9 a.m. until 9 p.m. – Miss Lil's Old Tyme Photos between depot & beanery

buildings; Mysterious Black Hole on Main Street near Art in the Park; JT's Inflation Jumpers on Main Street near Art in the Park; Barrel Train Rides for Kids on Main Street near Art in the Park

10 a.m. – Miss Rodeo Mandan Pageant Horsemanship Competition at Rodeo Arena

11 a.m. – Starion Financial Old Fashioned Picnic

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PHOTO BY JAMIE VETTER

There will be plenty of rides and events specifically for young children at this year's Rodeo Days celebration.

Wednesday, July 4

7 a.m. – KC Pancake Breakfast at Heritage Park

8 a.m. – Street Festival in downtown Mandan –bands, magic shows, cowboy action performers and other entertainers at various locations along Main Street intersections.

8 a.m. – Mandan Rodeo Days 10K and 5K Walk & Run – starts at Heritage Park/ Mandan Depot; register between 6:30 and 7:30 a.m. on Main Street; pre-register for \$20 at Five Nations Arts (401 West Main), or for \$25 day of race.

9 a.m. until 5 p.m. – Art in the Park at Dykshoorn Park and Heritage Park on West Main Street

9 a.m. until 5 p.m. – Miss Lil's Old Tyme Photos between depot & beanery buildings; Mysterious Black Hole on Main Street near Art in the Park; JT's Inflatable Jumpers on Main Street near Art in the Park; Barrel Train Rides for Kids on Main Street near Art in the Park

9:45 a.m. – Classic Car Parade

10:15 a.m. – Attempt to break the world record for longest YMCA Dance on Main Street

10:30 a.m. – “Freedom Sparkles Where the West Begins” Independence Day Parade on Main Street

Noon – Independence Day Golf Tourney – two-person best ball at Prairie West Golf Course

1 p.m. – Moose Lodge Parade Feed (111 11th Avenue NE)

2 p.m. – American Legion Baseball – Mandan A's vs. Bismarck Reps; and 4:30 p.m., Mandan Chiefs vs. Bismarck Governors

3 p.m. – Cowboy Action Performers at Heritage Park (east of Depot on Main Street)

7:30 p.m. – Mandan PRCA Rodeo Independence Day Rodeo Performance at Dacotah Centennial Park – with coronation of Miss Rodeo Mandan Queen & Princess

8 p.m. – Silver Dollar Street Dance with live music by Dirty Blond

8 p.m. – Lonesome Dove Rodeo Dance with live music by EZ Street

11 p.m. – Gigantic Fireworks Display at Dacotah Centennial Park sponsored by BNSF Railway

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PHOTO BY JAMIE VETTER

The Dakota Horizons Girl Scouts were judged Best Overall with this float in the 2011 Independence Day Parade.

2011 Mandan Parade award winners

The award winners of the 2011 Mandan Independence Day Parade have been determined by the Parade Awards Committee. Ann Jenks, chairperson of the awards committee, said judging took place in four categories: Most Creative, Most Unusual, Historical and Parade Theme. A traveling trophy called "The Northern" is also awarded to the overall winner.

Here are the 2011 award winners in each category:

Historical – Fort Lincoln

Most Creative – Prairie Rose Family Dentist

Theme – Mandan Golden Age

Most Unusual – Savvy SK8 & Sno

Best Overall – Dakota Horizons Girl Scouts

An awards presentation was held July 30, 2011 at Dykshoorn Park in Mandan.

Take a bus to the parade

Don't get stuck looking for a place to park near the Independence Day Parade in downtown Mandan. Chances are, you're not going to find one. And people who live nearby generally don't like it when strangers block their driveways.

There's a much simpler solution: Take the bus.

Free busing is available to transport people to and from Mandan on the Fourth of July. A total of seven buses will run non-stop from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. With six bus stops along First Street in Mandan, you'll never be more than a couple of blocks away from any location along the parade route.

For more information, visit www.mandanparade.com/bus

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Mandan Middle School Parking Lot

BISMARCK PICK-UP LOCATIONS

BSC Library Parking Lot

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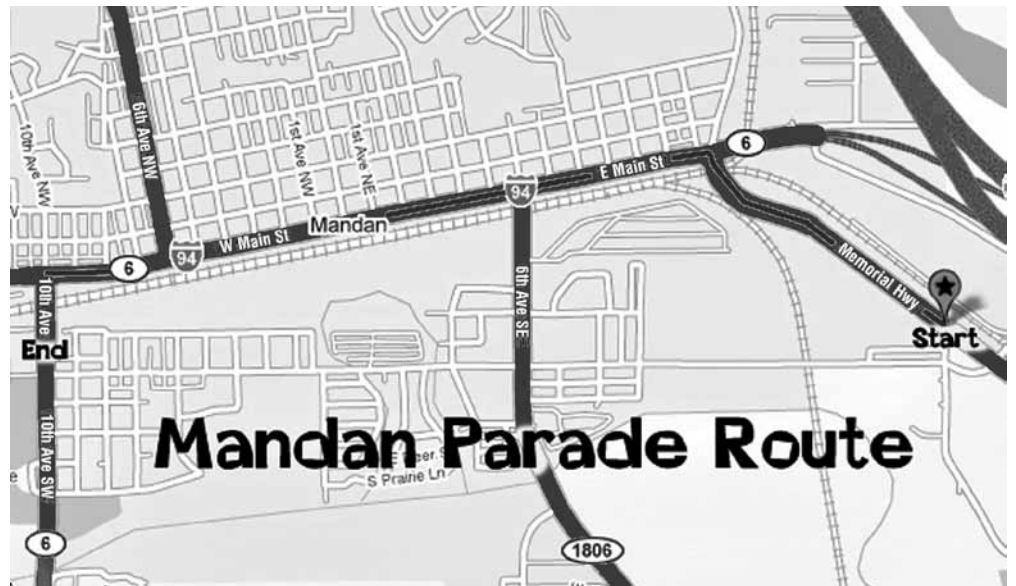
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Greetings from Gov. Jack Dalrymple

Welcome to Mandan and another exciting Rodeo Days celebration.

This event is a summer highlight in North Dakota, commemorating our nation's independence while enjoying great food and exciting entertainment for the entire family.

This year's celebration promises to carry on that proud tradition with activities that showcase North Dakota's rich history and culture, including the PRCA Rodeo, Art in the Park, concerts, a carnival and one of the state's largest parades.



DALRYMPLE

Professional rodeo performances will headline the Rodeo Days celebration, along with rodeo clown extraordinaire Rockin Robbie Hodges, chuckwagon races and a spectacular fireworks display.

Bring the family and experience the nostalgia and excitement of the Old West at this year's Rodeo Days.

Enjoy the celebration!

— Gov. Jack Dalrymple

Message from Mayor Helbling

By the time you read this, Mandan will have a new mayor. What a great four years it has been for me. And after this last year, I cannot express enough how proud I am to live in Mandan and how much I appreciate the support and dedication you have given to make Mandan a better place.

The events of 2011 made Mandan stronger and showed what great people we have right here in our hometown. When you were asked to help, you came through in flying colors. It was neighbors helping neighbors, no questions asked - the way it should be.

We have a lot to be thankful for this Fourth of July, and I would like to welcome you to Mandan's Independence Day Parade and Street Festival. As part of Mandan Rodeo Days, the parade is a celebration of our nation's freedom. Mandan Rodeo Days began 133 years ago as a joyous way to observe our nation's independence as well as our city's colorful history.

We hope you enjoy a popular activity that has become a newer tradition in association with the parade — our world's longest dances. In 2010, Mandan parade goers set a record for the world's longest chicken dance. Last year, parade attendees performed the Twist. And this year, we'll be grooving to the YMCA song.



HELBLING

The theme for this year's parade is "Freedom Sparkles Where the West Begins." We salute our active military and veterans who keep us free and safe. The U.S. Army National Guard is most appropriately serving as grand marshal for the parade.

Many thanks go to the volunteers associated with the Mandan Progress Organization for coordinating this important community event, as well as to the city police and public works staff who help make this event happen.

As you take part in the fun, please respect the neighborhoods and private property owners. Following the parade, we appreciate your assistance in placing trash in appropriate receptacles. Please pick up after lighting fireworks.

With everyone's cooperation, we can continue these events for years to come.

Sit back, relax and have a great time at this year's Independence Day Parade!

— Mandan Mayor Tim Helbling



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A message from the Independence Day Parade chairmen

Welcome to the Mandan Independence Day Parade and Street Festival. The 2012 theme "Freedom Sparkles where the West Begins" symbolizes patriotism and the freedoms we have in the United States of America.



ANDERSON



FRIESZ

Any updates, traffic conditions, busing information and the World's Longest YMCA Dance can be heard live. For those who can't attend, we encourage you to watch the parade live on the North Dakota KX Network.

Free busing is available from three locations in Bismarck and north Mandan from 7:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Why fight the traffic? The buses run continuously so you can come and go as you wish. You can even bring your lawn chairs.

There are many people involved in putting together the parade. These people volunteer their time every year so this tradition can continue. We sincerely appreciate all you do and thank you for your hard work and dedication.

More information about all Rodeo Day events can be found at www.MandanRodeo.com, www.MandanParade.com or www.Facebook.com/MandanParade.

— Mandan Independence Day Co-Chairs,

Dennis Friesz & Marlo Anderson

The North Dakota National Guard has been selected as the 2012 grand marshal. The sacrifices both near and far that these individuals have made for North Dakota and the U.S. are nothing less than astonishing. Please stand as they pass by on the parade route as a way of saying "thank you."

Rand McNally and *USA Today* are sponsoring the "Best of the Road," and Mandan has been selected as a finalist as the Most Patriotic Town in the U.S.A. There will be a team in Mandan to review the area and make that determination. Check the parade website or the Facebook page for updates on this exciting development.

Cool 98.7 will begin three-hour coverage of events leading up to the parade starting at 8 a.m. on July 4th.

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Thousands of people lined up to do the Twist at last year's parade, setting a new world record.



PHOTO BY JAMIE VETTER

Parade organizers expect to break world record for longest YMCA dance

By Karel Sovak

What do you do as a follow up to the world record for the longest Chicken Dance and the Twist?

Of course, one tries to organize another iconic dance line from the past – YMCA, by the Village People.

In 2010, Mandan's Chicken Dance covered 1.627 miles and set the world's record for the longest Chicken Dance. Last year, it was the Twist. The hope for this year is more people and more distance can be covered with arms and bodies spelling out the letters YMCA. The event will take place during the Mandan Independence Day Parade and Street Festival.

Jaden Hertz, the parade's project chairperson, said the idea is to keep people engaged with a variety of activities during the parade.

"Nick Ressler and Marlo Anderson were working on ways to entertain the people waiting before the 2010 parade," Hertz said. "With the length of the parade and the people who come out to watch, it seemed possible that Mandan could set a world record and have something entertaining as well.

"After setting records for the World's Longest Chicken Dance and the World's Largest Twist, a poll was conducted

on the City of Mandan website to determine what record people would like to set this year. The YMCA was the overwhelming choice."

Hertz said there is no current world record for the longest YMCA line, so it's likely Mandan will hold three world records after this year's event.

As was evident from past events, challenges in setting such records can be daunting. However, overcoming such challenges has proven to be a recipe for success for organizers. Hertz said the organizers believe they will be able to remedy any past issues.

"Getting music to cover approximately two miles is a challenge," Hertz said. "This year we will be using a series of speakers set up on the light poles to project sound over the crowd. The issue in the past has been the speakers have been at street level and the large group absorbs sound. Broadcasting down into the crowd should bring a better result."

Hertz said there will be a food drive for the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House. Participants are asked to bring non-perishable food items, and parade volunteers will collect them.

On the Fourth of July there's a place you can go, to the YMCA Mandan parade dance line.

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Warren steps down as parade band leader after 33 years

By Marc Conrad

A prominent and familiar figure will be missing from this year's Fourth of July Independence Day Parade in Mandan.

John Warren, the leader of the Mandan High School/Middle School Band, said he will attend this year's Independence Day Parade, but only as a spectator. It will be the first time in 33 years that Warren won't lead the band when it takes its position near the front of the parade, behind the grand marshal, the color guard and the folks who pass out flags.

Parade organizers weren't shy about praising Warren for dutifully fielding a full marching band in the city's long-standing Independence Day Parade.

"It requires dedication and commitment to motivate band members and parents to participate in a parade that occurs at one of the busiest times of the year," said Marlo Anderson, who has helped organize the parade for the past two decades. "I don't know how John Warren managed to field a band of 75 to 100 kids every year. There is so much pressure to skip the parade because of other activities on July Fourth."

Parade organizers say John Warren was the right man for the job of band leader because he grew up in Mandan.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

John Warren led the Mandan High School/Middle School Band in the Independence Day Parade during the past 33 years. He retired from the high school this year and decided to allow a new band leader to lead the procession.

"He knows the importance of this – that this parade is one of the city's best and oldest traditions," Anderson said.

Warren had a quick answer when asked how he managed to field a marching band in the parade every Fourth of July. "Let's face it, it's not a parade unless you have a marching band."

When asked the most unusual thing that ever happened

to him during the Mandan Independence Day Parade, Warren said it was during the state's Centennial in 1989. "I had to lead two bands in that parade. First I led the N.D. High School Centennial Parade, made up of musicians from across the state. And then I went back and led the Mandan Marching Band through the same parade."

Later that same night, Warren directed the Centennial Band, which played in the state's centennial birthday party on the State Capitol grounds. "I got up at 5 a.m. that Fourth of July and didn't get to bed until 1 p.m. the next day," he said.

Warren, who retired as band director at the end of the current school year, would probably have been allowed to lead the parade this Fourth of July. But he said he would have had to graciously decline any such invitation.

"I believe the new band director that the school hires should have that honor," Warren said. "It's a great way to get introduced to our rodeo/parade tradition and our fine citizens. It is a good way for Mandan to say 'Hello' and 'Welcome.'"

A graduate of Mandan High School in 1967, Warren earned his undergraduate degree from the University of North Dakota and his master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado. After college, Warren taught music and band at Ashley, N.D., for three years; Poplar, Mont., for three years; and Wolf Point, Mont., for two years, before returning home to Mandan as band director in 1979.

During his music teaching career, Warren has been presented numerous awards, including Reserve Educator Sweepstakes Leadership in Music Education, National Band Association Citation of Excellence Award, the Gold Apple Award and North Dakota Jazz Educator of the Year Award.

Serving as band director in Mandan has been a labor of love for Warren. He is highly respected in the community. He finds it gratifying that everywhere he goes, even during a parade, folks stop to visit with him.

"It has been a privilege to go marching down the street representing the school and our community," Warren said.

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Independence Day Parade memories last a lifetime

By Lisa Smestad

I didn't appreciate what I had until it was gone.

I left Mandan when I was 18 for only a brief moment. I had to get out. After living in Denver for four months I missed home.

Mandan was my home. It was quiet and friendly, where the weather didn't stop us no matter the season. It is where I went to school, played with my friends and even fell in love. People here are nice. There are no other words for the residents of Mandan.

This town gets pretty full around the Fourth of July. We are as patriotic as it gets.

Everyone you know shows up at the Fourth of July parade because it's tradition to have a "spot" picked out and parking an extra vehicle in that spot for 24 hours was a risk you could afford to take. Dressing up in Independence Day attire is something you will always see. People laughing, hugging and smiling.

My most memorable float in the parade was the Cass-Clay Cow (semi-tractor trailer). I think it was the most unique float I have ever seen. I even believe it "moo'd". I could be wrong as it was at least 20 years ago. I think that float sticks out mostly because my grandfather worked for Cass-Clay after he retired.

One year the parade route was scheduled to be on First Street. My mother lived on that street, and I was so excited I could finally have our family and friends over to sit on my lawn and watch as the parade went by. We had a great party during and after the parade as family and friends wanted to be with us to celebrate.

After the celebrations at the house we gathered our bug spray and blankets and went to the Rodeo Grounds to watch the fireworks display. My brother, sister and I quickly grabbed our blankets, got out of the car and immediately laid down on the hood of the car positioning ourselves so we could all see. Even mom and dad joined us.

We waited. And then "Boom!" The countdown had begun. I think they did those every half-hour until it was dark enough to light the fireworks, but that was OK because the people around you were lighting off what they had left over and that just added to the display at the rodeo.

When it started everyone stopped what they were doing and what they were lighting. We watched and watched, and it was amazing. Everyone cheered. Everyone always cheers — the perfect end to another perfect Fourth of July.

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*SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). The Condition of Education 2011 (NCES 2011-033), Indicator 17.

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N.D. National Guard honored as grand marshal of the 2012 parade

By Marc Conrad

For the first time in the city's history, the grand marshal of Mandan's July Fourth Independence Day Parade will be an institution rather than a person.

In past Mandan Independence Day Parades, the grand marshal honor has always been presented to an individual.

Riding second in the parade behind the parade's color guard will be Maj. General David Sprynczynatyk, the adjutant general of the N.D. National Guard, and his wife Connie Sprynczynatyk, who will ride in a Vietnam-era jeep.

Also appearing in the parade alongside Sprynczynatyk will be soldiers and airmen from the following units: Recruiting and Retention Battalion, who will ride in a red, white and blue Humvee; 191st Military Police Company; 1st Battalion 188th Air Defense Artillery Battalion; 957th Engineering Company (bridging equipment); 814th Area Support Medical Company; 1st of the 112th Aviation Battalion; and 3662 Maintenance Company.

The honor to the N.D. National Guard highlights the patriotic service that state guardsmen have provided to the nation's defense. Since Sept. 11, 2001, almost 3,000 soldiers and 1,800



Hundreds of North Dakota National Guard members remain deployed across the world this year, and several more are awaiting mobilization.

airmen from the N.D. National Guard have supported the nation's global war on terrorism.

Currently 400 of the state's guardsmen are serving overseas while about 4,000 remain in the state for emergency response and national defense. For every 10,000 citizens in the state, 65 serve in the N.D. National Guard. That is a rate that is more than four times the national average.

Here are the locations of the current mobilized units of the N.D. National Guard:

- 188th Engineering Co., Wahpeton, 162 soldiers, Kuwait
- 1st of 112th Aviation Battalion, Bismarck, 55 soldiers, Kosovo
- 119 Civil Engineering Support Squadron, 60 airmen, Southwest Asia
- 818 Engineering Company, Williston, 95 soldiers, Afghanistan

These are N.D. National Guard units that have been alerted for possible mobilization:

- 1919 Bismarck Contingency Contracting Team, 4 soldiers
- Det. 42, Bismarck OSA, 8 soldiers.

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Mandan Rodeo poster honors bareback riding brothers

By Ellen Huber

The Mandan Rodeo Days publicity poster for 2012 honors a local pair of young brothers who have made a name for themselves in bareback riding at the high school, college and professional levels.

Ty Breuer, 21, has broken into the ranks of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) top 50 riders for 2012, and Casey Breuer, 19, is currently ranked 11th in the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association standings.

The Mandan Rodeo poster featuring the Breuer brothers is the ninth in a series of prints highlighting memories, notable contestants and featured events of the annual Fourth of July celebration.

Ty Breuer is currently ranked 40th in the PRCA world standings with \$3,364 in winnings to date and third in the Badlands Circuit with \$2,157 earned. He is the PRCA's 2010 Rookie Bareback Rider of the Year and national college champion in bareback riding. He climbed within the top 25 ranks of the PRCA bareback riding standings in 2011, but broke his ankle at a rodeo in June at Elizabeth, Colo. He had to take the remainder of the season off to heal.

Ty's 2012 earnings include a first place win at the Bismarck rodeo held in February and a tie for first in Gillette, Wyo. His career PRCA earnings stand at \$37,452. He previously competed for



Ty and Casey Breuer, brothers who are from North Dakota, are featured on this year's Rodeo Days poster. Both young cowboys are expected to compete at this year's rodeo in Mandan.

Central Wyoming College in Riverton. Ty was a three-time N.D. high school bareback champion in 2006-2008, and 2008 reserve national high school bareback champion.

Casey Breuer is fourth in the PRCA 2012 Badlands Circuit standings for bareback riding with \$1,595 won so far, largely due to a first place win at Valley City in March. He finished sixth in the Badlands Circuit in 2011 with winnings of \$6,223 and seventh in the National Intercollegiate Rodeo

Association for bareback riding. Casey is competing in his second year at Northern Wyoming Community College in Gillette. He is now sitting second in bareback riding in the Central Rocky Mountain Region. He was North Dakota's 2009 and 2010 high school champion and the 2010 reserve national high school bareback champion.

The sons of Ed and Penny Breuer, the boys grew up on a cattle ranch about 20 miles southwest of Mandan.

Ty and Casey are thrilled to appear on this year's Mandan Rodeo poster. Both have autographed posters of previous honorees Brad Gjermundson and Wayne Herman hanging on their bedroom walls at the family home.

"No matter how far I travel, I will never forget where I come from and the support the people have given me," Ty said. "Nothing is better than performing in front of Mandan's hometown crowd on the Fourth of July."

Casey added, "Every rodeo is fun to go to, but the one I look forward to most is in Mandan. The best feeling in the world is riding in front of the people who have supported me my whole life."

Competing in Mandan's Fourth of July rodeo is a tradition for the Breuer family. Ty and Casey's dad, Ed Breuer, and their uncle, Dean Breuer, climbed aboard bareback horses at Mandan Rodeos in the 1980s and 1990s. Ty and Casey plan to compete at the 2012 Mandan Rodeo and will be available to autograph posters as their schedules allow.

The 2012 Mandan Rodeo poster features original artwork of Deb Knuth titled "Breuer Brothers." Posters are available at the Mandan Progress Organization office at 411 West Main Street and at the Mandan Rodeo July 2-4.

For more information, visit www.mandanrodeo.com or call 751-2983.

A rip-roaring lineup slated for 2012 Rodeo Days

By Ellen Huber

Mandan Rodeo Days will continue in 2012 to inspire fans to holler "Yeeeeee Hawwww!" with its celebration of western culture over the Fourth of July.

A tradition of rip-roaring entertainment since 1879, the celebration revolves around Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association-sanctioned competitions on July 2, 3 and 4 beginning at 7:30 p.m. at Dacotah Centennial Park.

The rodeo will feature award-winning bucking stock from Frontier Rodeo Company. For the second time in three years, Frontier Rodeo's Delta Ship was named the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo Bareback Horse of the Year, wrapping up a remarkable year of achievement for the Winnie, Texas-based stock contractors. Frontier also had the PRCA Bareback Horse of the Year (Full Baggage) and PRCA Saddle Bronc Horse of the Year (Medicine Woman) in 2011, the first time one company

had swept those two awards.

Chuckwagon races return by popular demand. Another highlight will be clown and barrel man Rockin' Robbie Hodges of Cave Springs, Georgia; and Miss Rodeo Mandan queen and princess pageants. Professional rodeo announcer Tim Fuller of Claremore, Okla., returns to keep fans informed of every buck, kick and jump.

Mandan Rodeo contestants again compete for nearly \$42,000 in prize money, \$6,000 per event, thanks to support from many generous sponsors. The rodeo attracts top professional cowboys and cowgirls from the Badlands Circuit of North and South Dakota and across the nation including many Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (WNFR) qualifiers.

Rodeo tickets go on sale June 1. Reserved seat tickets are \$20 through July 1. General seat tickets sold in advance are \$16 for adults for the July 4 performance,

or \$14 for other nights. Children's tickets sold in advance are \$8 for any night. Tickets will be sold at the gate before each rodeo performance, \$18 for adults on July 4 and \$16 for other nights. Children's tickets are \$9 at the rodeo. A discount will be provided for the July 2 Family Night of \$2 off each child's ticket with purchase of an adult ticket. Children under age six are admitted free of charge.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mandan Rodeo Committee
Publicity Chair Ellen Huber,
phone 701-667-3485 or 701-
400-6249

Mandan Rodeo Committee
Chairman Neil Ness, phone
701-391-5680

Mandan Progress Organi-
zation Executive Director Del
Wetsch, phone 701-751-2983
or 701-220-2959

Stay tuned to www.mandanrodeo.com for ticket sales locations

Parade history

Continued from page 1

Due in part to the Independence Day Parade, Mandan is currently one of six cities in the nation competing in the Best of the Road competition in the category of Most Patriotic.

“Rand McNally and *USA Today* have just announced we are among the finalists,” Anderson says.

Since its inception, motivation for the Independence Day Parade has been fueled by a mix of patriotism and promotion of the Mandan Rodeo.

For years, the Mandan Rodeo was one of the biggest and best-known on the circuit. It became famous as part of the “big loop” that included the Cheyenne Frontier Days and the Calgary Stampede, allowing cowboys to go from rodeo to rodeo winning money in what was referred to as “Cowboy Christmas” around the Fourth of July.

The Mandan Rodeo is legendary, beginning as a Fourth of July event in 1879 with a baseball game and pony races. In 1895, the Morton County Fair Association was established, and money was dedicated to building a fence and oval race track in south Mandan.

Stephen P. Weekes, a prominent horse rancher from Flasher, was instrumental in the event’s development, along with his sons,



The float sponsored by Savvy Sk8 and Sno at last year’s parade was a throwback to a bygone era. It won a prize as Most Unusual.

The Sons of the Pioneers also made an appearance in the Fourth of July festivities.

Roy Rogers, one of the best-known cowboy actors, was invited to appear in the Mandan Fourth of July festivities in the 1950s. But Rogers told parade organizers that he wouldn’t send “his hat” to the event for the amount that had been paid to Gene Autry, Anderson says. What Rogers didn’t understand, Anderson explains, is that Gene Autry received part of ticket sales from the Mandan Rodeo because he was part owner of the rodeo stock. Autry’s partner was the late Frank Wetzstein of Mandan, who gave Autry a horse called “Little Champ,” which was Autry’s horse after “Champion.”

In the ‘50s, it almost became a tradition for Autry to ride his horse through the Corner Bar at 3rd Avenue and First Street NE, now occupied by the Wells Fargo Bank. Autry, who once owned the California Angels, appeared in the parade three times, Anderson says.

Steve and Charlie, and his son-in-law, Max Theil, who created the Heart River Roundup. And “Badlands Bill” McCarty joined the effort to create the Mandan Roundup in 1923.

In 1938-39, the rodeo grounds were rebuilt in south Mandan. During the 1940s, the Mandan Rodeo Association, headed by Frank Wetzstein, organized a high-class production where top

cowboys like Toots Mansfield, Gene Ross and Casey Tibbs competed.

And big-name movie stars used to appear in the Mandan Independence Day Parade and Rodeo. In the 1950s Gene Autry, Wild Bill Elliot (Red Rider Films), Monte Montana and Rex Allen, then stars of the Silver Screen, appeared in both the Independence Day Parade and the Mandan Rodeo.

The parade has changed significantly since the 1950s and ‘60s, when the event was dominated by horse-drawn wagons, horse riders and local bands. Since then the parade has become dominated by tractor-pulled floats, although it still has horse riders, horse drawn-wagons and one marching band, The Mandan High School/Middle School Band.

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PHOTO BY JAMIE VETTER

Mandan a finalist in contest to determine most patriotic city in the U.S.

By Stephanie Nalewaja

Red, white and blue blanket the city of Mandan during the annual Rodeo Days celebration, demonstrating one of the many reasons the community has been named a finalist in an annual contest to determine the most patriotic city in the U.S.

After four weeks, 22,000 votes, over 680 town nominations and more than 1,500 photos and reviews, 30 towns were chosen as finalists in the Best of the Road contest sponsored by Rand McNally and *USA Today*. Six cities became finalists in each of five categories, including Most Beautiful, Most Patriotic, Most Fun, Best for Food and Friendliest.

Mandan came in second in the voting for the Most Patriotic category with 267 votes. Gainesville, Texas, won the popular vote with 349 votes. The other finalists include: DeLand, Fla.; Watertown, N.Y.; Duluth, Ga.; and Enterprise, Ala.

The online voting ended May 16, but the contest isn't finished yet. A team of experienced travelers will be touring each of the cities that were named finalists between June 15 and July 15 to determine a winner.

Organizers of Mandan Rodeo Days said they hope the team visits Mandan during the Fourth of July festivities.

On July 3, the Mandan Rodeo Days sponsors the Patriot



The float sponsored by Mandan Golden Age exemplified Mandan's patriotism during the 2011 parade. The float won a prize for Best Theme.

PHOTO BY JAMIE VETTER

Night Rodeo Performance where the audience wears red, white and blue in support of the troops. A red, white and blue guitar and "Studs & Guns" will be raffled off. The proceeds raised during the raffle go to help the local Wounded Warriors Project.

"During the Mandan Rodeo Days, the colors red, white and blue can be seen from the flags flying high to people

wearing the patriotic colors," said Del Wetsch, executive director of the Mandan Progress Organization. "I believe it is the combination of festive activities and the community spirit that has led to Mandan being a finalist as the most patriotic city."

On July 4, children line the streets waving U.S. flags in hopes of getting candy thrown from the parade entries. Mandan hosts the Mandan Independence Day Parade where people from surrounding communities come to experience the enveloping atmosphere of American pride. During the day, families can enjoy fun-filled activities. As the darkness falls, a magnificent fireworks display will light up the sky.

"The Independence Day celebrations and Mandan Rodeo Days is a wonderful time to remember why we are free celebrating as a community and state," said Ellen Huber, Mandan's business development and communications director.

Soon, Mandan will find out if all the local festivities and community spirit will earn the honor of being called the most patriotic city in the U.S. For updates on the contest, go to www.bestoftheroad.com.

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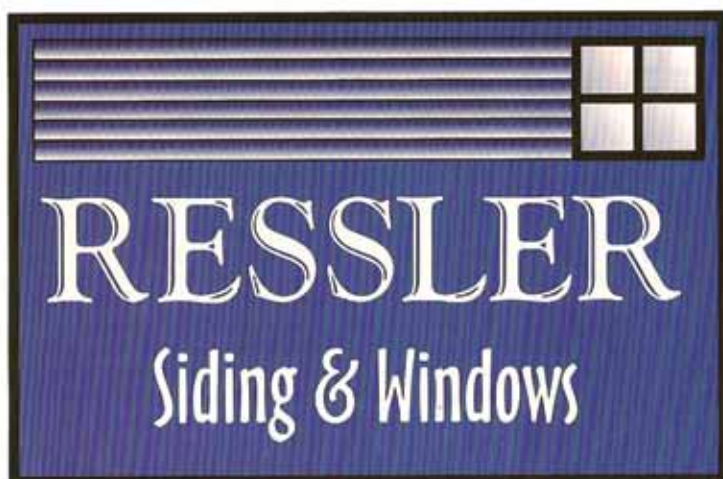
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