

## White Earth Valley Saddle Club 2017 Hall of Fame Special Achievement

The White Earth Valley Saddle Club filed Articles of Incorporation with North Dakota's Secretary of State in September of 1956. The club purchased 57 acres of land on the east side of White Earth Valley Road and went to work building an arena and chutes, with all construction work performed by volunteers. Telephone poles, donated by Bell Telephone, became the first posts in construction and were placed by Frank Crimmins, Jim Marmon and Donald Hutton.

The club's first rodeo, held in July of 1957, featured saddle bronc riding, bareback riding, calf roping, barrel racing and team tying. Stock used was furnished by George Slein, Jim Marmon, Frank Crimmins, Nick Geres and Ben Johnston at a cost amounting to \$473. The concession stand was headed by the wives of the club, and included a lunch stand consisting of planks laid across barrels set in the shade of a few trees. The White Earth Valley Saddle Club adopted the purple and gold school colors of nearby White Earth High School as their official club colors.

In 1964, the club had grown enough to warrant construction of a 500-seat grandstand, with a concession stand below. In 1973, cement was poured to replace the previous sand floor.

In addition to their own rodeos, the club has hosted horse shows, Little Britches Rodeo, annual trail rides, steak fries, fun days and junior barrel racing days. 2017 will mark the club's 9<sup>th</sup> year hosting their own Queen Pageant, with winners in four categories and prizes totaling \$5000.

In 2008, the club switched from their NDRA affiliation of prior years to hosting the Rough Rider Rodeo, with the latter proving a good fit for the club's focus on sportsmanship with an emphasis on the youth. They diversified by adding Ranch Rodeo and, in 2016 started allowing kids to compete in ranch rodeo along with the adults with events like mutton busting and wild sheep milking.

In 2014, the White Earth Valley Saddle Club held a benefit rodeo for the North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame, raising \$5000. In 2015, another benefit resulted in a gift to the NDCHF totaling \$4000, comprised mainly of prize money donated by the event winners.