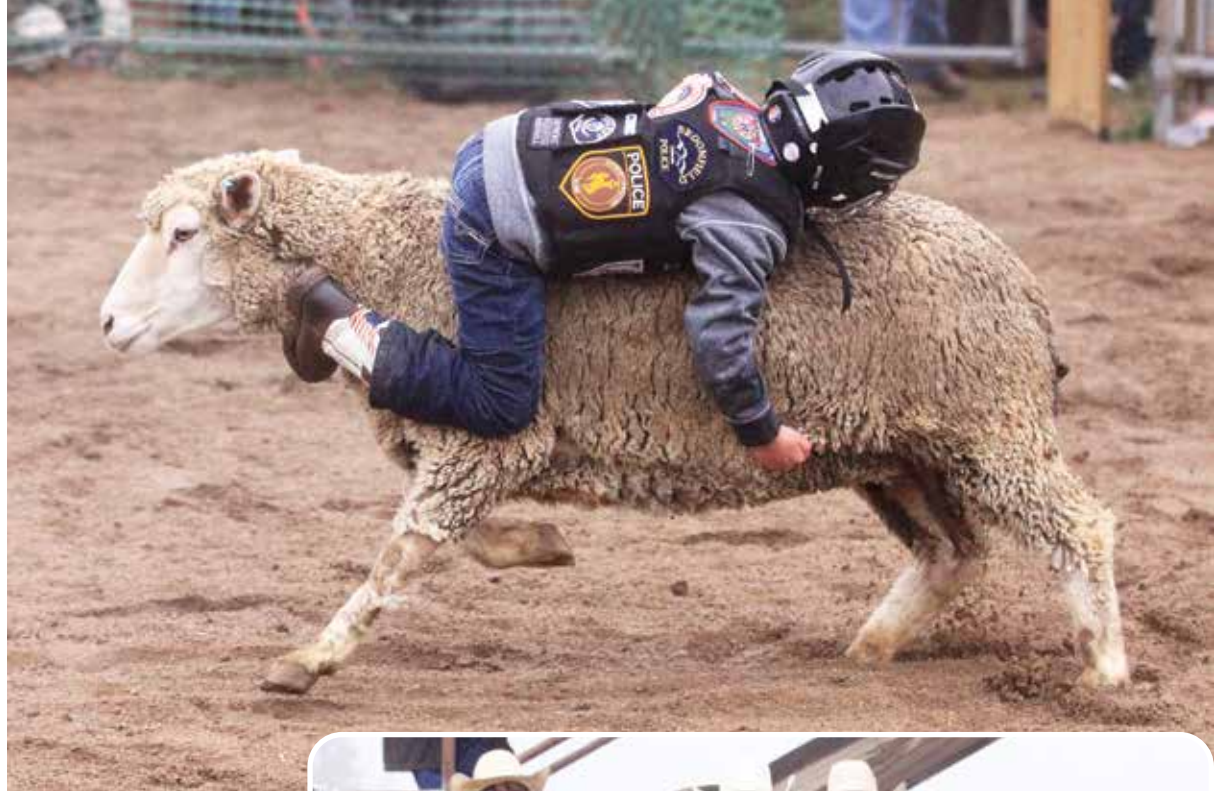


Buck for the Badge assists survivors



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

A wild ride

Top, left; A bull rider hangs on for dear life. Top, right; Brayden "Wrong Way" Estrada registered the longest ride of the day in the Mutton Bustin. Bottom, right; The bulls were ornery right out of the chute. Bottom, left; Staying atop a bull isn't as easy as it might seem. Middle, left; Juan Pablo Alaniz takes control of his animal for a second place finish.

Dave Gibson Gilpin County

In the line of duty, in 2016 three Park County Sheriff's Office deputies were shot; one mortally, one critically, and one sustaining non-life-threatening injuries. Shortly thereafter, Park County Patrol Officer and part-time bull rider Shane Larsen approached friend and EMS Steve Henry about promoting a bull riding event to benefit the families of fallen police officers, firemen, and other first responders. All part of a close-knit community, Henry, who had staged such events in the past, immediately agreed.

Saturday, September 10, at the Cody and Shelby Memorial Arena in Gilpin County, Buck for the Badge held a professional bull riding fundraiser for the sixth time since the Park County tragedy. During those events, Buck for the Badge has raised a quarter million dollars and helped sixteen families struggle through the emotionally and often financially difficult times following the loss or disablement of a loved one. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to all first responders who selflessly put their lives on the line for ours.

Twenty-five cowboys from as far as Wyoming and Nebraska showed up on a dark and drizzly day to show their support on the eve of the 21st anniversary of 9/11. Supplied by Ford Rodeo Ranch in Brighton, the bulls with names like Double Nickel, Flipper, and Wild Turkey looked surly. One by one the bull riders tested their skills against the brawn of the mighty beasts.

Some stayed aboard for the full eight seconds to receive a score while others were dumped unceremoniously onto the dirt. One of the disgruntled bulls charged the barrel. With its horn and part of its head well inside it, the rodeo clown was glad he wasn't also inside at the time.

During the second go-round, Brenden Sheridan demonstrated expert technique on his way to scoring a 78 on top of Livewire, winning first place and taking home \$1,116 in prize money. Juan Pablo Alaniz took second place with a score of 71, pocketing \$744.

For more information about Buck for the Badge, go to www.buckforthefallen.org or call 303-589-0682. Donations may be sent to Buck for the Badge, 1040 Townley Cr., Longmont, CO, 80501.

