

Press Release

The Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians Shares History with the Valley Center Stampede Rodeo



The Valley Center Stampede Rodeo is celebrating its 16th year of bringing quality, family-friendly rodeo to Valley Center. Unlike the nearby Lakeside and Norco rodeos, the Valley Center Stampede Rodeo lacks permanent facilities. As such, each year a dedicated group of individuals come together just weeks before each Memorial Day weekend and literally raise a quality rodeo out of a dusty field located on the Belanich property, adjacent to the Valley Center Community Center. A project of this magnitude takes an immense amount of time and skill to pull off each year; however, with a price tag of roughly \$90,000 it first requires financial backing through sponsorships.

The Valley Center rodeo first began in 2002 as a “Bulls & Barrels” rodeo. However, as a full event line-up was added, the rodeo was rebranded as the “Valley Center Stampede Rodeo.” While the event location moved around a bit in its early history, thanks to the

generosity of the Belanich Family, it has been conveniently held on their property for most of their 16 years.

As you can imagine, it is quite a feat to logistically and financially plan a rodeo from the ground up each year. This burden is greatly diminished by the significant financial backing of the local Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians. For many years, the Rincon Band has been a Platinum Spur Sponsor with an annual donation of \$10,000.

Along with their donation, Rincon Contributions Committee Chairwoman Mavany Verdugo told the rodeo committee, “We have been blessed with the means to fund our government and enjoy sharing our blessing with others. Sharing is a Native tradition and we are pleased to assist our neighbors and non-profit organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life for others. Thank you also for your service and dedication to our communities and families.”

The Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians has a long history of supporting the community of Valley Center. Rincon can trace its history in the area back more than 10,000 years and currently has a membership of 500 plus with a 6,000-acre reservation. The Rincon Band also owns Harrah’s

Resort California, the Travel Center, and the first California Indian Tribe owned brewery, SR76 Beerworks.

The Rincon band has a lengthy history of supporting the economic health of the North San Diego Region, contributing more than \$254 million in 2013. The band also shares its good fortune with its neighbors through tribal government donations to worthy causes and events that contribute to the welfare and health of the region. Rincon is a proud supporter of Valley Center's Stampede Rodeo. In addition, the Rincon tribal government's Fire Department provides increased fire, medical paramedic, and ambulance services to the neighboring communities; as well as public safety through a contract with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department for extra law enforcement protection.

The Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians also announced that they will be partnering with the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Governments. "Our goal is to strengthen our sovereignty and unify our community by purchasing the fractionated property interests within the Rincon Reservation land base," stated Bo Mazzetti, chairman of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians. "We plan to reclaim land that was lost to the band through the historical policy of allotments by encouraging owners to voluntarily sell these properties back to the tribe. All recovered land will be placed into trust for the collective and beneficial use of tribal members. We are encouraging all allottees to take advantage of this one-time program. The Land Buy- Back Program offers the Rincon Band the opportunity to recover what has been divided and reunite the lands of our ancestors."

The Valley Center Stampede Rodeo is honored to be sponsored by the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians as they share the commitment of putting community first. The Stampede Rodeo proudly caters to the rodeo talents of local cowboys and cowgirls, and encourages local youth to get an early start in rodeo via the Mutton Bustin', Jr. Barrels, and Calf Scramble events. Unlike a Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association (PRCA) rodeo, there is no membership requirement which makes the Valley Center Stampede Rodeo accessible to local riders and gives the rodeo committee more latitude to host the ever popular youth events.

"All the time, sweat, and tears that our committee puts into the rodeo each year is rewarded when we look out into the arena and see the faces of our friends and neighbors competing in America's greatest pastime," said Rodeo Chairwoman Joyce Holmes. "We started as a local rodeo, we are sponsored by the locals and we will stay committed to providing a venue for locals to compete. We are so fortunate to have the support of Rincon. The Stampede Rodeo is Valley Center at its finest."

For more information on the 2017 Valley Center Stampede Rodeo, visit www.VCStampede.com and their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/valleycenterstampede/>.

Stampede Rodeo Committee Note: Junior Quisquis of the Western Days Committee is creating a brand new "professional rodeo group" that is currently being advertised and promoted for the 2018 Memorial Day weekend, the same weekend that the Valley Center Stampede Rodeo has been bringing rodeo to Valley Center for the last 16 years. We love rodeo and welcome as much rodeo as possible; we simply wish to let our community know that we intend to once again feature local cowboys and cowgirls at the "17th Annual Valley Center Stampede Rodeo" over the 2018 Memorial Day weekend and we are not undergoing any name or organizational changes.