



## CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL RODEO ASSOCIATION

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For immediate release

### SMS Equipment Kicks Off 2023 Pro Rodeo Tour

When the 2023 season of the SMS Equipment Pro Rodeo Tour kicks off in Buffalo Lake, Alta. May 27-28, attendees will revel in the excitement, pageantry and athleticism happening in the arena. Most of those same rodeo fans, however, will probably not give much thought to why title sponsor SMS Equipment — one of Canada's largest construction and mining equipment dealers — chose to partner with Pro Rodeo Canada, both last year and this upcoming season.



At first glance, the two entities appear to have little in common. A closer look, however, reveals a sense of values so closely aligned that the relationship seems more than just logical — almost predestined. Not surprisingly, a partnership forged in such commonalities is proving beneficial to the two organizations, the fans and the sport itself.

#### Rodeo Drive

“When pondering our sponsorship opportunities for the 2022 season, we immediately considered the love western Canadians have for rodeo and the culture that surrounds it,” Tom Tobin, the company's vice president of equipment sales said. “That affinity stems from the fact that almost every town, hamlet and community in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and many parts of British Columbia seems to boast its own rodeo grounds and their own rodeo. That culture is ingrained into the people from these locales; they embrace it with a true, well-deserved, sense of pride. We also saw a real parallel between that rodeo lineage and the stories most of our customers relate about how their companies came to be.”

To illustrate, Tobin said that probably more than half of SMS Equipment's customers can trace their company's origins to a family member who owned rural property and needed to build a dugout for the farm or do other work on the land. After purchasing an excavator at auction for their work, they were often approached by someone from a nearby farm or business who needed similar work done, leading to additional equipment purchases. And a new business was born.

“Today, many of these same customers still proudly own and maintain large farms and livestock. Much like those involved in rodeo, there's that sense of pride in their roots. From our perspective, this is two sides of the same coin; we saw a great opportunity to serve them both and continue to see that today.”

That sentiment is echoed by Denny Phipps, CPRA General Manager, “Not only do we share an almost identical values set of being willing to do the hard work, doing things right, being part of your community, trying to give back when you can, and so on, SMS Equipment folks also seem to enjoy an almost family-like feel throughout their company. Rodeo is built around the concept of family so it's great to have a partner who shares those sentiments.”

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And, while SMS Equipment sees the title sponsorship as a powerful vehicle for strengthening its brand with its customers, both SMS personnel want people to understand that the intent runs much deeper than simply a promotional opportunity.

“It’s already proven an outstanding way to enhance existing relationships and develop new ones.

Rodeo is such a big part of life — particularly here in western Alberta — that many of our customers themselves have been long-time supporters of the sport, with banners placed right beside ours at events.”

The feedback SMS Equipment has received from existing customers in cities on the Pro Rodeo Tour has been extremely positive, indicating that their intended message of support is reverberating. For one such customer, Bill Lowry, a senior operations manager for O’Chiese Contracting, LP, a First Nation-owned oil and gas support business, SMS Equipment’s choice is both impressive and appreciated.

“The rodeo tradition in my family is very strong; several generations have successfully competed in it,” he said. “As a result, the sport is in my blood — it might be closer to my heart than moving dirt. So, to see a company that we’ve been doing business with for so many years get involved in something we truly value was very special.”

### **More Alike Than Not**

As if to answer the rhetorical question posed at the outset about why SMS Equipment has embraced CPRA sponsorship, the list of parallels between rodeo and the equipment supplier are seemingly endless. Consider: the growing push for diversity; the emphasis on safety (in CPRA’s case, the safety of both the contestants and the animals); the ability to work together seamlessly as a team; respect for the competition and more.

“In addition, both groups are often asked to spend an inordinate amount of time away from their families and homes which is always challenging,” said Tobin. “But authenticity, a key component of who we are as a company, is almost always on display at a CPRA event. Inclusivity and togetherness are also at the forefront of each of these events. I’ve never lived in a small town and I have never rodeoed. Still, despite all that, I can put on a pair of cowboy boots and hat and go to a rodeo event and feel the warmth, the hospitality, the welcoming reception, and the appreciation from those I meet. And whenever we attend one of the tour events, I’m always humbled by the many competitors who take time to thank us for our support.”

He added that, while they are not looking for outright acknowledgment, it's always nice to see that a decision — particularly a major one like the partnership with CPRA — has proven to be the right choice.

“Positive feedback from both the competitors and the organization, grateful SMS Equipment customers, and a chance to contribute to the growth of this culturally significant sport? I’d say we definitely did the right thing.”

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### **2023 SMS Equipment Pro Rodeo Tour Dates:**

Edmonton, AB	Sept 23-24 (2022 with points counting for 2023)
Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement - Cason, AB	May 27-28
Grande Prairie, AB	June 1-4
Lea Park (Marwayne), AB	June 9-11
Wainwright, AB	June 23-25
Sundre, AB	June 23-25
Ponoka, AB	June 26-July 2
Williams Lake, BC	June 30-July 2
Teepee Creek, AB	July 14-16
Morris, MB	July 21-23
Medicine Hat, AB	July 27-29
Regina, SK	August 4-5
Strathmore, AB	August 4-7
Dawson Creek, BC	August 11-13
Lethbridge, AB	August 24-26
Armstrong, BC	August 30-Sept 1
Armstrong, BC Pro Tour Final	September 2
* Edmonton, AB (Tour points count for 2024)	Sept 29-30

**SMS Equipment Inc.**, is the largest independent Komatsu dealer globally, selling, renting and providing full-service support for the most advanced earthmoving equipment for the mining, construction, road construction, and forestry industries.

To learn more, visit [www.smsequipment.com](http://www.smsequipment.com)

**The Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA)** with headquarters in Airdrie, Alta. is the official sanctioning body for Professional Rodeo in Canada. The CPRA approves 55 + events annually with a total payout exceeding \$6 million. The organization oversees the SMS Equipment Pro Tour Finale each fall in Armstrong, BC, holds their premiere event—the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR)—at Westerner Park in Red Deer, Alta. in early November and endorses the Maple Leaf Circuit Finals as part of Canadian Western Agribition in Regina, Sask.

For details, please see [RodeoCanada.com](http://RodeoCanada.com)

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