



December 1, 2009

Karl Stressman
Commissioner
Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association
101 Pro Rodeo Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Dear Mr. Stressman:

We are writing to congratulate you and the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) for ending your sponsorship relationship with the US Smokeless Tobacco Company (USSTC). We would like to see PRCA promote a healthy, active, and tobacco-free lifestyle to the children in its audiences, and we sincerely hope that USSTC will be replaced with a healthy sponsor, rather than a tobacco company.

The cover story in the November 13 issue of *ProRodeo Sports News (PSN)*, entitled "Pigskins and piggin' strings: Several ties exist between NFL, rodeo athletes," was very timely. As you know, it discussed the many similarities between football players and rodeo cowboys, and highlighted the rodeo roots of several professional football players who grew up on ranches, competed in rodeo events, own stock, and more.

Like other top mainstream sports organizations, the NFL does not accept sponsorship dollars from a tobacco company. Without big tobacco, rodeo will be able to move closer to football and other mainstream sports, because it will be more comfortable for families and children to attend.

Smokeless tobacco causes deadly and disfiguring cancers, and increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Tobacco marketing at rodeos gives young audience members the message that using tobacco is part of an adult cowboy or rodeo fan. Unfortunately, 14% of boys age 12 to 17 nationwide use smokeless tobacco, and the rates are higher in rural states, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

We are very pleased to see family-friendly sponsors like Wrangler, Justin Boots, and AT&T continuing to support the PRCA. We trust that another healthy sponsor – not a tobacco company – will fill the gap left by USSTC.

Sincerely,

Andrea Craig Dodge
Buck Tobacco Sponsorship Project

"Cowboy Ted" Hallisey
Cowboy Ted's Foundation for Kids

Mayor Phillip W. Houk
City of Pendleton

Larry Matheis
Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition

Niki Sue Mueller
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