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Once a basic rodeo project structure has been developed, the project coordinator can begin to work with the steering committee to build community awareness and support for restricting tobacco sponsorship of the local rodeo. The steps listed at the right are an example of how some groups have organized their communities around tobacco sponsorship of rodeos. As always, your ultimate strategy should be developed locally.

TIP SHEET #9



Community Organizing to Address Tobacco Sponsorship of Professional and College Rodeos

1. Educate the rodeo steering committee members on the issues, including:¹

- The harmful effects of smokeless tobacco.
- Rodeo events, culture, and terminology.
- The tobacco industry's history with and interest in rodeo.
- Sponsorship as a marketing tool.

2. Provide training in grassroots community organizing² and media advocacy³ for your steering committee members. Develop some of them to be spokespersons for the committee. Create talking points and media messages for spokespeople to utilize. Include sample letters to the editor and opinion editorials for the committee or community members to send. **Training curricula specific to college campuses are available.⁴**

3. Participate in community events, such as health fairs, county fairs, community days, college campus activities, and events related to the local rodeo (such as parades) to “get the word out” about your cause. Circulate petitions or postcards that call upon rodeo organizers to drop tobacco sponsorship; you can use the signatures to show evidence of community support for your cause to rodeo organizers and/or the media. Ask everyone you talk with to provide their name and contact information, so that you can keep them informed about your work and contact them to request their attendance at future meetings and community events.

4. Solicit letters of endorsement from community and faith-based organizations, community leaders, and public officials. Don't overlook seeking letters from rodeo insiders. For example, the Buck Tobacco project in San Diego County secured letters of support from the National High School Rodeo Queen and “Cowboy Ted” Hallisey.⁵

5. When your focus is a college rodeo: Schedule one-on-one meetings with the key college administrators, including the Dean of the College of Agriculture (if that is the school governing your college rodeo); the college rodeo coach; members of the governing student board, such as the Student Senate; and university administrators, such as the Vice President of Student Affairs, the vice president that oversees the College of Agriculture, and the university president. Find key advocates in those offices that may champion your cause. Ask to be placed on the agenda to speak before key decision-making bodies, such as the Student Senate and faculty Academic Senate.

¹ See the following Tip Sheets: Spit Tobacco: Product Types, Marketing and Health Effects; Introduction to Rodeo: Basic Information and an Overview of Professional Rodeos; How and Why Tobacco Companies Sponsor Rodeos; Resource List.

² The Midwest Academy provides excellent community organizing resources, including a curriculum, consulting and training. <http://www.midwestacademy.com>

³ See the Media Advocacy Tip Sheet for more information.

⁴ See *The College Advocacy Guide*, developed by the California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN).

<http://www.cyanonline.org/guides/materials.jsp>

⁵ See Buck Tobacco website at <http://www.bucktobacco.org> for sample letters of support.