Let’er Buck: Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Courts visit the Capitol

Salem, OR—For almost two decades the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Courts have been visiting the Capitol. This year, as with the past two, they were hosted by Senator Bill Hansell and Representative Greg Barreto, the two legislators of the Pendleton area, along with Representative Jodi Hack, former competitor in and founder of the Barrel Racing competition at the Pendleton Rodeo.

“As a Pendleton High School graduate and Round-Up supporter, it means a great deal to me to see so many young women working towards their goals and making a difference in the community,” said Rep. Jodi Hack (R- Salem).

The Pendleton Rodeo, now known as the Pendleton Round-Up, officially began in 1910 as a way to celebrate the history of Pendleton’s “wild west”, honoring both the cowboy and Indian heritages, with competitions in horse and foot races, and greased pig contests. Over the years the Round-Up has been shaped into what it is today: a four-day long Rodeo with events in bronc and bull riding, roping and cow milking, along with the Happy Canyon Indian Pageant’s “Wild West” show dedicated to the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes that are native to the Pendleton area, with traditional dances to watch and food and crafts to buy.

Each year these two groups nominate a court of women who exhibit the traditional values to represent them. This year, the Round-Up Court consists of Queen Kendra Torrey, and Princesses Sydney Jones, Taylor Ann Skramstad, Kaleigh Waggoner, and Betsy West. The Happy Canyon Pageant is represented by Princesses Virginia Conner and Gabriella Lewis.
The women posted the colors on the Senate Floor before session with the Round-Up Court in their formal Leathers and the Happy Canyon Court in their traditional Regalia. The Senate invocation was given by Queen Kendra. They then made their way to the House Floor to receive courtesies from Representative Barreto and watch the business of the House.

Senator Hansell and Representatives Barreto and Hack hosted a luncheon in the Governor’s Conference Room to honor these women for being selected to the Courts. Governor Kate Brown visited the girls to offer her congratulations and take photos.

“It is a privilege and honor to host the Round-Up and Happy Canyon Courts in the State Capitol. They are an outstanding group of accomplished young women.” Senator Hansell said.

Members of the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Courts align their annual visits to the Capitol with the Portland Rose Festival where they participate in the Grand Floral Parade and ride their horses to promote the Round-Up and Happy Canyon events that take place in September.

“The Pendleton Round-Up is an event which the entire community looks forward to.” Representative Barreto commented. “I am glad to have been able to host these women at the Capitol again this year and continue to be impressed by their hard work, character, and charisma.”

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