

NWSS is Staying Put

Talk of relocation may have quieted, but changes are afoot for the National Western.

by Kasey Miller, associate editor

Last year, there was talk of the National Western potentially relocating (see page 136 of the March 2012 *Angus Journal*). Those talks have quieted slightly; however, changes will be made to the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in efforts to expand the grounds and update the facilities, says Paul Andrews, NWSS president and CEO.

I-70 was the catalyst of the moving talks last year, but as of right now, Andrews notes it is intended to stay straight. This relieves the pressure of moving the event grounds altogether, but research of other leading livestock shows completed by the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) has shown that “deferred maintenance and outdated design left the Denver Coliseum and National Western facilities structurally and technologically obsolete,” Andrews reports. He reassures that obsolete doesn’t mean the facilities are unsafe, but rather their current condition makes it difficult to compete for business.

The existing business model is not enough to cover the cost of renovations, so the DURA research found that other major livestock facilities have two major things in common, he says. The first is that the other major shows cooperate with the city to drive business to the facilities all year round. The second is that they have a dedicated revenue stream to maintain the facilities in the form of a lodgers’ or visitors’ tax.

The NWSS has a \$100-million economic impact on the city of Denver in just 16 days. In order to generate enough income to fund the facilities for a full year, the NWSS Executive Committee is working in cooperation with city leadership, Visit Denver, and Arts and Venue Denver to plot a new business model. Andrews says NWSS leaders hope to build something called the National Western Center, which would be built upon the three pillars of education, agriculture and entertainment. These pillars would help guide the decisions of “what

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PHOTO BY MATTHEW ELLIOTT

events could be hosted to celebrate our Western heritage all year round,” he adds.

For instance, a new event April 4-7 will be the Rodeo All-Star Weekend, which will bring three rodeos featuring top competitors from all over the world for three days in April.

He says that 30-40 of the top leaders in the agriculture and business industries are in on the planning stage. Horse shows and livestock shows during other parts of the year are definitely in consideration.

Once the additional programming is decided, Andrews says, facility renovation comes into play, then a potential new site or additional land can be considered. He assured that the National Western Stock Show will stay in the city and county of Denver, even if it expands. Currently, the show sits on 95 acres and can use (but does not own) the 25 acres on which the coliseum sits. Andrews says many options within Denver are being considered to gain a larger NWSS footprint.



PHOTO BY KASEY MILLER

NWSS diehards, rest assured. “We are staying laser-focused on the livestock show and the yards. Those programs will continue to be the centerpiece of National Western Stock Show programming,” he confirms. “The National Western was founded on the livestock show and we’re serious about that. We want to continue to be the Super Bowl of livestock shows.”

