

For Immediate Release: 5/29/2020

**Media Contact**

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## IMMEDIATE PRESS ADVISORY

### 2020 National High School Finals Rodeo not allowed in Lincoln due to Covid-19

*Lincoln, NE* - The Lancaster County Agricultural Society was informed late yesterday (see below) by Lincoln / Lancaster County Health Department that we will not be allowed to host the National High School Finals Rodeo in Lincoln as scheduled this year in mid-July at the Lancaster Event Center fairgrounds due to health concerns amid the current COVID-19 global pandemic.

"We've enjoyed working hard with the National High School Rodeo Association on the preparations for the NHSFR's first year of four planned in Lincoln over the next eight years and are heartbroken we won't be able to welcome the over 1,500 high school rodeo contestants from 43 states, 5 Canadian provinces, Mexico and Australia," said Amy Dickerson, Managing Director.

From NHSRA's press release on their Facebook page (below), we understand their desire to find another venue for NHSFR 2020. We wish them luck as they look for an opportunity for their high school competitors to showcase their talents safely in the midst of this COVID pandemic.

We know that the entire state of Nebraska looks forward to continuing to working with the NHSRA on next year's NHSFR Lincoln as well as a return visits scheduled in 2026 and 2027.

"Lancaster Event Center fairgrounds would like to thank all the City, County and State supporters of NHSFR Lincoln and will look to recognize in a public way in the near future," said Kendra Ronnau, Lancaster County Ag Society Board President.

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**From:** Rick W. Tast <[RTast@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:RTast@lincoln.ne.gov)>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 28, 2020 6:02 PM

**To:** Amy Dickerson <[adickerson@lancastereventcenter.org](mailto:adickerson@lancastereventcenter.org)>

**Cc:** Pat D. Lopez <[PatDLopez@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:PatDLopez@lincoln.ne.gov)>

**Subject:** National High School Finals Rodeo

Ms. Dickerson,

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 71-501, Lincoln Municipal Code Chapter 8.18, and Lancaster County Resolution No. R-07-0035, Interim Director Lopez has determined that, in light of the current COVID-19 Emergency, the National High School Finals Rodeo event cannot be allowed to take place in Lincoln or Lancaster County in July.

This decision is based in part on the risk of spread of COVID-19 that would be posed to the citizens of Lincoln and Lancaster County that would result by bringing thousands of people from dozens of States and potentially several countries together. In addition, the large number of people expected to attend, the close proximity those individuals would be in, and the length of time individuals would be at the event are some of the factors causing serious concern to the LLCHD.

Because this event has the potential to overwhelm the health resources of the community, not allowing the event to take place is necessary to control the spread of COVID-19 in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Rick

**Rick Tast**

**Assistant City Attorney**

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**ABOUT LANCASTER EVENT CENTER FAIRGROUNDS**

*The Lancaster Event Center (LEC) is the county fairgrounds located on the east side of Lincoln, Nebraska and known as the Midwest's premier multi-use facility and home of the Lancaster County Super Fair with over 320 other events annually, contributing over \$40M in economic impact to the area. Key features of LEC fairgrounds include 400,000 square feet across five inter-connected buildings, full catering and food/beverage service, multiple advertising/naming sponsorship opportunities, 320-site year-round campground with water/electric hookups (additional 964 large event campsites), a new 3,300-person covered grandstand with 400x600' outdoor multi-use arena, ample outdoor livestock pens & horse stalls all set on 160-acre grassy fairgrounds with ample, convenient parking adjacent to natural and retail amenities. LEC is located minutes from I-80 Waverly exit and other major highways while being just 15 minutes from downtown Lincoln attractions. Opened in 2001 by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, LEC operates as a public, independent county-level political subdivision and 501(c)(3) non-profit. The Agricultural Society is celebrating 150 years for its county fair in 2020 in its mission under Nebraska State Law to be a key contributor to Lancaster County's youth, culture and economy by providing a professional, friendly and fun experience at the LEC while striving to engage the community in the unique agricultural heritage of Lancaster County for years to come. For additional information, visit [LancasterEventCenter.org](http://LancasterEventCenter.org) or contact the media contact above.*



### **For Immediate Release: May 29, 2020**

Based on orders received from the Lincoln / Lancaster County Health Department, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National High School Finals Rodeo will not be able to proceed as planned in Nebraska.

The state's notice reads, "This decision is based, in part, on the risk of the spread of COVID-19 that would be posed to the citizens of Lincoln and Lancaster County that would result by bringing thousands of people from dozens of states and, potentially, several countries together. In addition, the large number of people expected to attend, the close proximity those individuals would be in, and the length of time individuals would be at the event are some of the factors causing serious concern with the LLCHD. Because this event has the potential to overwhelm the health resources of the community, not allowing the event to take place is necessary to control the spread of COVID-19 in Lincoln and Lancaster County."

The National High School Rodeo Association is evaluating options for other venues to host the 2020 National High School Finals Rodeo.

"We are disappointed that we will not be able to host the 2020 National High School Rodeo in Nebraska; however, we also respect the decisions made by the state regarding the event," said James Higginbotham, NHSRA executive director. "The youth are our future, and they deserve the opportunity to showcase their skills in the arena. Therefore, NHSRA leadership is evaluating the possibility of holding the event at a different location, while adhering to social distancing mandates to protect the contestants and exhibitors. We will share updates at [www.nhsra.com](http://www.nhsra.com) as more information is available."

For further updates, please follow the NHSRA website and social media channels for the latest information.

### ***About the National High School Rodeo Association***

*The National High School Rodeo Association, the #1 youth rodeo association in the world, was founded in 1949, the mission of the NHSRA has existed first and foremost to promote and support education and to develop the essential attributes of leadership, dedication, commitment and responsibility in high school students. While preserving the western heritage, the NHSRA teaches its members to maintain the highest regard for each other and their livestock. The NHSRA's mission does not stop on the high school level, as the Association also strives to impart to its members the advantage of higher education and the desire to never stop learning. The NHSRA supports their dreams by annually awarding more than*

*\$550,000.00 in scholarships at the national level and \$1.9 million in scholarship cumulatively on the international level. With over 70 years of history behind the NHSRA and continued growth and success, the organization is preserving the past and preparing for a successful future.*