

## **ADVERTISING & PROMOTION TIPS**

### *To help you get the most out of your budget.*

Advertising and promotion usually are the smallest part of an event's budget. There are so many other expenses management must cover (facility rental, judges, awards, etc.) that there may be little if any left to advertise and promote the event. However, there are inexpensive ways to promote an event on a limited budget.

#### **FREE PUBLICITY**

News Releases – The release contained in “Coming to an Arena Near You” is just the starting point for free publicity. You will receive a copy of the automated news release once your show dates have been approved. The newspaper in your area also will receive a copy of the news release at least three times, once for each time it appears on the three-month show calendar. It is a good idea to contact your local newspaper and ask if they received the news release. Follow-up increases the chances of coverage for your event. You also can send the news release to equine publications in your area. If it's not printed in its entirety, maybe your show dates will be included in the calendar of events.

Equine Press/Local Media – Contact these sources of publicity at least a couple of months prior to your event. Target equine publications that feature ranch horse events and don't forget livestock publications. A percentage of their readers also have horses. Get the local media's attention by letting them know if proceeds will benefit a local charity or if there's a newsworthy story about the exhibitors or horses. You never know what might attract an editor's attention.

#### **ADVERTISING**

Trade Out Advertising – Offer to hang a banner in the arena for a local newspaper or equine publication in trade for a print advertisement. You also can approach a radio or television station with the same offer. They might be willing to do a live remote broadcast from your event if given sponsor billing.

Charity Rates – If your event is a fund-raiser, ask for charity rates when purchasing newspaper advertisements. These rates can be substantially lower than rates for businesses. There might be some qualifications for these rates, so be sure you can prove the event is charitable.

Advertising Contract – If you manage more than one event and are in charge of advertising and promotion, consider establishing an advertising contract with equine publications. Ad rates may decrease based on the number of times you advertise during a year, which may cover several events. Some publications give discounts for three ads; some start at six ads. Discuss this option with your advertising representative.

#### **SPONSORSHIPS**

Determine your needs and match those with the businesses in your area. Goods and services in exchange for signage is a good trade and can help your budget if you don't have to purchase certain items. In addition to the tack and feed stores who can donate items as awards, contact local hotels and restaurants. Let them know how many people will attend the event and the estimated time it will end. Banners and signs that can be a part of the sponsorship could yield more patrons to the sponsoring businesses. Sponsorships can be negotiated individually. It's a give-and-take relationship.

#### **DON'T FORGET THE SPECTATORS**

Although drawing spectators is probably not the goal of your event, don't forget those who come to watch the competition. They may be future exhibitors at your event. Provide a list of entries for each class so that the audience can follow along through the competition (see entry sheet template). Feel free to announce exhibitor, ranch/owner and horse names throughout the show so everyone gets recognition.