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#131204-ATESARENA

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## *June Ates Arena Grand Opening*

The grand opening of the June Ates Arena kicks off with a ribbon cutting at 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13 at the new arena located at 8690 Bobby Brown Road in East Milton. The ribbon cutting is followed by the Santa Rosa County Stampede Classic, a community celebration sponsored by the Santa Rosa County Fair Association. The event includes local non-profit organizations and business displays, a visit from Santa Claus, live music, free food and beverages, games, vendors, pig chase and a tie-down roping shoot out competition at 7 p.m. The stampede continues at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14 with barrel racing and a grand entry parade at 6 p.m. followed by an evening of bulls, barrels and broncos riding, with live music for all to enjoy. The public is invited to attend.

The new facility is named after local horse enthusiast June Ates, whose family has lived in Santa Rosa County for generations. The arena will be available for local community events and will provide a venue for a wide variety of outdoor events from equestrian activities, heavy equipment and car shows, music festivals, and livestock competitions. Additionally, the arena may be used as a staging area for personnel and supplies after a disaster.

According to Santa Rosa County District 2 Commissioner Bob Cole, the Santa Rosa County Fair Association, the Tourist Development Council and the local equestrian community were instrumental in bringing this project to fruition, "Through the hard work of many volunteers over several years, we are able to make this project a reality for the residents of Santa Rosa County." Cole continues, "From 4-H events for our children to outdoor festivals that increase tourism in the off-season, this arena will be an asset to our community."

The arena is 300 feet by 205 feet and includes a 300 feet by 130 feet dirt arena, two 35 feet concrete pads for bleachers, enclosed judging booth and is designed to accommodate future growth. The project is estimated at \$1.23 million from District 2 recreational funds.

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