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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BMCC Rodeo receives honors, scholarship donations; head to nationals

PENDLETON, Ore. – Blue Mountain Community College rodeo standout Danyelle Williams was recently awarded the prestigious Riley Freeman Memorial Athlete of the Year Award. Since 2009, this award is given in memory of former BMCC instructor and rodeo coach Riley Freeman to a sophomore rodeo athlete who has demonstrated not only excellence in the sport of rodeo, but also in the classroom. The winner is selected by BMCC rodeo coaches Larry Patterson and Shawn Eng.

Williams, a sophomore from Vale, Ore., with a 3.29 GPA, is studying elementary education at BMCC, and plans to return to the team next year. She competes in barrel racing, goat tying, team roping and breakaway roping.

“This is an honor,” Williams said of receiving the Riley Freeman Award. “It can definitely be a challenge to juggle academics with being an athlete. It can be hard to find the time – you have to use your time efficiently for sure.”

Williams will head to the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyo., later this month to compete in barrel racing with several of her Timberwolf teammates. She was a member of the National Champion BMCC Women’s Rodeo team in 2015, and was the Women’s Rookie All-Around Champion for 2015 as well.

The men’s and women’s rodeo teams also received a financial boost this month with two large donations to go towards scholarships for rodeo team members. The team last week received a \$3,500 donation towards scholarships from the Pendleton Round-Up Association, presented by Pendleton Round-Up General Manager Casey Beard. On Monday, BMCC was presented with a \$20,000 check from the Northwest Intercollegiate Rodeo Finals Association. NWIRFA Board President Jason Graybeal, treasurer Blaine Hendrickson and board member Tiah DeGrofft presented the scholarship funds to BMCC President Cam Preus and rodeo team coaches Larry Patterson and Shawn Eng.

The NWIRFA Board organizes BMCC’s home rodeo at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds each spring, and initially, the rodeo’s proceeds just went to cover expenses related to putting on the rodeo. However, the rodeo’s success over the past several years has enabled NWIRFA to provide scholarship funds to the rodeo team as well.

“For the last six or eight years, we’ve been able to provide additional funds for scholarships,” Graybeal said. “We feel really good about that since NWIRFA was originally created to just put the rodeo on each year.”

(more)

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(continued)

In 2015, NWIRFA presented the BMCC rodeo team with another \$20,000 check, \$18,000 in 2014, and \$20,000 in 2015.

Twelve BMCC rodeo team members will head to Casper, Wyo., this week for the College National Finals Rodeo (June 12-18), including Williams, who will compete in breakaway roping and barrel racing events. Joining Williams are JT Garland (steer wrestling), Chase Hansen (team roping, with Chaise Robbins), Kenny Haworth (bareback riding), Jared Parke (tie down roping, steer wrestling, team roping, with Jordan Tye), Tyler Potter (bareback riding), Chaise Robbins (team roping, with Chase Hansen), Jordan Tye (tie down roping, team roping, with Jared Parke), Lauren Leyva (goat tying), Jessica Lewis (barrel racing), Quincy Pendergrass (goat tying), and Emily Sorey (barrel racing).

The women's team will defend its 2015 national title. They are currently sitting in second place nationally at just over 800 points off the leader mark, while the men hold the top spot in the national rankings going into Casper, nearly 2,100 points ahead of second-ranked Feather River College (Quincy, Calif.). Williams and Parke are both ranked No. 1 in the women's and men's all-around national standings, respectively, going into CNFR. Parke also currently leads the nation heading to Casper in tie down roping and steer wrestling, while Parke and Tye are sitting first in the rankings for team roping.

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