

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

It will be a cowboy Christmas in Chase County during this year's Chase County Country Christmas.

"Chase County has been described as the place where the West truly begins," said Deb Zeiner, director of the Chase County Chamber of Commerce, sponsor of Country Christmas. "We couldn't think of a better way to honor our Western heritage than by having a Cowboy Country Christmas."

Several new activities have been planned around the Cowboy Christmas theme, Zeiner said, including a cowboy-themed coloring contest, sponsored by Strong City Pizza Hut; Little Miss Cowboy Christmas contest; Meet a Cowboy with local cowboy Bruce Brock demonstrating rope tricks and leather-working; an ugly cowboy boot and hat contest; a Touch the Tack table, where children can touch a saddle, bridle and brushes used in caring for a horse; and a Blessing of the Animals at 10:30 a.m. in Swope Park in Cottonwood Falls.

"I think the Blessing of the Animals is a sweet idea," Zeiner said. "After all, Jesus was born in a barn. I just see this as a way to acknowledge the love we have for the furry, or scaly, friends in our lives."

Another new activity will be the first-ever Fabulous Fruitcake Toss, at the Millstream Motel in Cottonwood Falls.

"We'll have a fruitcake toss set up for children," said Richard Clute, co-owner of the Millstream. "And a fruitcake launch for adults. We're going to see if we can launch them across the river. But if we don't make it, the fish and ducks will have a special treat!"

From 2 - 5 p.m., the 2007 Holiday Homes Tour will showcase four spectacular Chase County locations - the historic Duehn Ranch home of Josh and Gwen Hoy at the Flying W Ranch near Clements, west of Strong City; the newly-restored St. Anthony Church at Strong City, a Western-themed home high on a hill east of Strong City and the historic Pioneer Bluffs at Matfield Green. Admission to the Homes Tour is just a \$5 donation that includes admission to all four locations.

"These are absolutely spectacular places on the tour this year," Zeiner said. "They include glimpses in to the large ranch homes of our Chase County founders, an absolutely beautiful gem of a church and a home that you might call a cowboy's palace!"

In the past, Country Christmas has included a dance at the Community Building in Cottonwood Falls at the end of the day of events. But this year, there will be a contra dance on Friday, Nov. 23 from 8-10 p.m. at the Community Building instead.

"We thought it would be more fun to have the dance on Friday night, while we still have some energy left," said Chamber president Kevin Ireland. "The dance is free and everyone is invited."

At 4:45 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive by carriage in downtown Cottonwood Falls, where they will visit with children until 7 p.m.

"At 7 p.m., we'll light the courthouse and this year we're also lighting the newly-restored Cottonwood River Bridge," Zeiner said. "It's going to be beautiful. And after all of that, we'll end the day with the Christmas carol singalong at the Prairie Coffee Company."

There are many more activities scheduled for the 2007 Chase County Cowboy Christmas and local businesses will be open extended hours that day. For a complete schedule, see www.chasecountychamber.org or contact the Chase County Chamber of Commerce at (620) 273-8469.