

No shortage of volunteers

Lending a hand at the Rodeo is 'an addiction' for some

By **CINDY SANTOS**
The Salinas Californian

Greg Baxter lives in Galt, just south of Sacramento, and drives more than 150 miles to volunteer at the California Rodeo Salinas and several other events at the Salinas Sports Complex.

Baxter, one of 11 nominees for the California Rodeo Association's Committee Person of the Year award, started volunteering about 15 years ago and has no plans of quitting.

"It's now kind of an addiction," said Baxter, one of about 1,100 volunteers who make the California Rodeo a reality.

The 39-year-old electrician volunteers for the maintenance and construction committee, a group who, among other tasks, sets up the field fencing and bleachers.

"Pretty much, we do everything but the plumbing," Baxter said.

Nancy Cason of Hollister, another nominee for the Committee Person of the Year award, has been a volunteer for about 20 years. She started out on the barbecue committee in the mid-80s and has been working on the security committee for about seven years.

"We're extra eyes for law enforcement," Cason said.



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Doug Lee, second from left, was the 2005 Committee Person of the Year winner. Also pictured are: Chrystle Alberta, left, Terry Pettitt, second from right, and Tom Pettett.

The security committee helps maintain order and keep the peace. It also keeps unauthorized people from entering secured areas.

Cason also volunteers at the California International Air Show and helps raise money for 13-year-old ice skater and Olympic hopeful Amanda Dobbs.

"I just enjoy it," she said.

Doug Lee of Corral De Tierra, the 2005 Committee Person of the Year winner, has been involved with the California Rodeo for two decades.

"It's a lot of fun," Lee said. "I get a bang out of it."

California Rodeo spokeswoman Sally Hamana said all the committees nominate an exemplary committee member. The winner is announced at a committee luncheon, and each is awarded with a one-of-a-

kind belt buckle.

Since the California Rodeo Association is a non-profit organization, the group relies heavily on volunteers, Hamana said.

"We have a filtering system for committee people," she said.

Volunteers fill out an online application and are initially assigned to work on the Manpower Committee, which they must work on for at least 70 hours before being assigned to a permanent committee, Hamana said.

The volunteers do more than just the Rodeo, she said. The Salinas Sports Complex has concerts throughout the year and other events that require volunteers, Hamana said.

ONLINE

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION:

www.carodeo.com/volunteering.php