

Annual Big Week is kid friendly

By CINDY SANTOS

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Festivities for the California Rodeo Salinas will kick off Tuesday, with a host of family-friendly events, attractions and souvenirs planned throughout Big Week.

The highly popular Kiddie Kapers Parade starts at 7 p.m. Tuesday. Now in its 76th year, the parade will attract thousands of costumed youngsters to march through the streets of downtown Salinas. This year's theme is "Fun in the Sun," and participants are asked to dress accordingly.

On Thursday, the Rodeo's opening night, children age 12 and younger get in free.

"Thursday is our family day," said Sally Hamana, Rodeo marketing coordinator.

The traditional Roundup Barbecue, which has bounced around a bit in its assigned day, will be one of the main attractions on opening day. It starts at 4 p.m. Thursday.

Sunday is another family-oriented day, Hamana said.

The Coors Bull X-ing tent — the heart of the Rodeo's club scene — will become the Fiesta Cantina with Mexican food and mariachi music, she said.

Throughout its run, the Rodeo will offer plenty of child-friendly activities.

AT A GLANCE

■ **KIDDIE KAPERS PARADE:** Parade starts at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Salinas Recreation Center at 320 Lincoln Ave. in downtown Salinas near the Steinbeck Library. This year's theme is "Fun in the Sun." Free to all kids in elementary school.

■ **CALIFORNIA RODEO SALINAS:** Kids 12 and younger admitted free Thursday. Admission for kids 12 and younger is \$7 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

■ **BOBBLE HEAD:** The first 2,000 kids to come to the Rodeo on Saturday will get a free bobble-head doll modeled on the image of now-retired bull fighter Doug Forzani.

■ **KIDS CORRAL:** Open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday and from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The usual favorites include the Kids Corral, with interactive games and a bounce house, Hamana said.

"We really pride ourselves on having a lot of kids' activities," she said.

Old favorites such as mutton bustin' and stick-horse racing return, along with some newer practices.

Back by popular demand, the first 2,000 children 12 and younger to come to



RICHARD GREEN/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN FILE PHOTO

Kids sprint to the finish line in 1999 during the Stick Horse Race at the California Rodeo Salinas.

the Rodeo on Saturday will receive a free bobble-head doll.

Introduced last year as a new addition to the long list of Rodeo collectables, the 2005 bobble-head doll featured a cowboy with a moustache and was a huge hit, Hamana said.

This year's bobble-head is based on the image of local bull-fighting legend Doug Forzani, she said.

"Rodeos are one of those things that are really fun for kids," Hamana said.